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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

CORBETT AND RADIO FOR ADULT EDUCATION

by

DIANE MARY MIRTH

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

in

ADULT & HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION.

Edmonton, Alberta

SPRING, 1995.

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled CORBETT AND RADIO FOR ADULT EDUCATION submitted by DIANE MIRTH in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION in ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION.

H. Hodysh, Thesis Supervisor.

P. Brook.

R. G. McIntosh.

January 17, 1995.

ABSTRACT

This study focusses on the work of E.A. Corbett who saw the need to develop radio as a vehicle for adult education. He was convinced of the democratic right of every person to have access to education. He saw in radio a means to create a powerful forum for discussion and dissemination of ideas. Radio could be used to educate Canadians on matters of national importance and instill in them a clear sense of identity.

This thesis traces the role Corbett played in establishing radio as a tool for the education of adult Canadians. From the establishment of radio CKUA at the University of Alberta in 1927, Corbett went on to play a key role in the development of the CBC as a public utility which would serve the people of Canada. He was especially interested in bringing high quality programming to those isolated by distance and long winters. His vision culminated in two of the most successful experiments in radio, Farm Radio Forum in 1941, and Citizens' Forum in 1943. Both of these programmes have been duplicated in as many as 44 other countries.

Corbett's ability to attract and draw people to a cause was crucial to his success. He established extensive networks throughout the country of people who were equally committed and dedicated, and thereby succeeded in making radio an important voice in adult education in Canada.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Behind every production is a special cast of people helping to make it happen. My cast was as follows:

My Committee: Dr. Hodysh, Dr. Brook and Dr. McIntosh. Thank you for your guidance, your comments, your recommendations and revisions, your enthusiasm and your acceptance of the importance of Corbett and his work.

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CHAPTER 1

CORBETT AND RADIO FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Introduction

Radio first appeared on the Albertan scene in 1922 when Southam Newspapers took out licences for CFAC in Calgary and CJCA in Edmonton (Peers, 1969). After that time this communications medium became an important part of the lives of everyday Canadians. Its influence increased over the next two decades. Radio became an important means of delivering adult education. The development of radio as a means for such delivery owes much to the work of Edward (Ned) Annand Corbett. In his hands it became an important tool for the enrichment of the quality of life of many Canadians, particularly those in rural areas. Corbett's approach to radio programming has been copied by as many as 44 other countries which have seen the benefit of this medium for the education of rural people.

Corbett saw in radio a chance to expand horizons and to guide destinies, to instill in Canadians a strong sense of national consciousness and unity. He saw in radio the opportunity for every person to have access to knowledge which he believed to be an expression of the democratic ideal.

Corbett was a driving force that kept alive the ideal of the right of every person to have access to education. He was convinced that radio could make a tremendous difference to the lives of Canadians, especially those in rural areas, and he went about making it happen. Ned Corbett's sheer tenacity, dedication and vision coupled with an

amazing ability to network and gather people to a cause were critical in carrying the development of radio as a vehicle of adult education to a successful conclusion.

Corbett's work with radio has not been given the attention it deserves. It is the path of the development of radio from its beginnings at the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta, through the development and formation of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) as a public utility, to the instigation of Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum that are be addressed in this thesis. These threads are brought together in an attempt to interpret the nature, extent and success of the contributions made by Corbett to the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education.

Background

Before dealing with the question to be addressed in this thesis, and by way of understanding the context of the era, it is interesting to look at some of the social and political conditions existing in Alberta in the early 1920s when E.A. Corbett arrived to become assistant to A.E. Ottewell, the Director of Extension at the University of Alberta. The Depression, during the 1930s, and later the Second World War encouraged people like Corbett to become vigorously involved in the development of radio for education.

The between-war years saw considerable changes in economies and governments along with the introduction of new and exciting ideas in Alberta. Still a

pioneer province, Albertans were cut off from communication because of the large distances between settlements, and the long bitter winters. Conditions were harsh which often led to adversity and economic distress; the need for change to improve the quality of life for the people of Alberta was critical.

The early nineteen twenties saw discontented Albertans deserting the traditional governing parties in favour of the United Farmers of Alberta and later the Social Credit party. The time was ripe for innovative, energetic ideas to help improve living conditions for the average citizen. The time was ripe for those of passion and conviction, with deep interest in the welfare of people. Edward Annand Corbett was such a man.

During the First World War Corbett was involved as an instructor in Khaki College where he met Henry Marshall Tory, the President of the University of Alberta. In 1920, after recovering from an incident with mustard gas, Corbett accepted Tory's invitation to join the Department of Extension at the U of A. He became assistant to the Director, A.E. Ottewell. Corbett spent the next fifteen years involved in the work that he loved best: delivering adult education to Albertans in rural communities.

As a result of the energy and enthusiasm for the work they were involved in, Ottewell, H. P. Brown, (visual communications expert at Extension), and Corbett became excited about a new medium for reaching those isolated in rural communities. Radio was the newest experiment in communications. Radio could reach Albertans with programmes in music, information and news. Corbett became convinced that the development of radio was vitally linked to the delivery of adult education.

In the late 1920s when rumblings of the development of national radio began, it was only natural that Corbett would be intensely interested, and would become involved. His opinion that radio, in Canada, should remain inside the public domain was loudly and actively expressed. Corbett became involved in the process that was to culminate in the development of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

In 1935 when pressure was mounting and national interest was high to form the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) to "help improve the adult education opportunities in rural areas," who better to select as the first director than Ned Corbett who had been actively involved in the adult education of rural Albertans for the previous fifteen years?

As director of the CAAE Corbett was able to continue development of radio for adult education. The war in Europe convinced educators like Corbett of the need to develop a strong national identity within Canada.

In an effort to educate isolated rural Canadians on matters of national importance and citizenship, several experiments concluding with National Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum were developed. These programmes were organized nationally around local discussion groups and remained popular within Canada for over a decade. They received much international attention because they were an effective means of bringing education to rural populations.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

The historical accounts of the twenties, thirties and forties concerning the development of adult education in Canada are certainly incomplete. Much was being done, especially in Alberta at the Department of Extension, but there was little recorded. The whole area of the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education has not been addressed in any systematic fashion. The development of radio has been considered in isolated pockets and not linked in any way, or to any person. This thesis is concerned with the nature and extent of the influence E.A.Corbett had on the development of radio as a way of bringing education to those isolated in rural areas of Alberta and later in the whole of Canada.

Research Question

What contribution did Edward Annand Corbett make to the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education?

Sub-questions

1.What was the nature and extent of his involvement in the development of radio at the Department of Extension?

2.What was the nature and extent of his involvement in the development of the CBC?

3.Why did he develop Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum to be used as vehicles for adult education?

Limitations

The role played by E.A. Corbett in the development of radio for the delivery of adult education will be the main focus of this thesis. This is not an attempt to write a biographical account of the life and work of Corbett, but rather an attempt to look at one aspect of his work in adult community education and present it within an historical framework.

The thesis will provide a brief description of his early life to establish the basis for his involvement in the Department of Extension at the University of Alberta. No discussion will be provided of his family life as there is nothing the writer can find providing any information on this aspect of his life.

It is outside the boundaries of this work to provide a detailed account or analysis of Corbett's role as Director of the CAAE except in as far as it relates to the topic.

There will be no attempt to deal with Corbett's involvements in any other organizations, associations, or appointments, e.g., The Banff School of Fine Arts, The La Pas Experiment, The Joint Planning Commission, or the United Nations committee for education. Corbett's book, *We Have With Us Tonight,* provides information on these activities.

This thesis is an attempt to describe as accurately as possible the conditions of Corbett's times. It is realised that the study relies primarily on data already written, hence once interpreted. It is also realised that the writer comes to the study with biases, values and personal interests which will influence this interpretation and

analysis.

When writing of the work of one person there is a danger to discount the work of others in the area. Wherever plausible credit will be given to those who worked with Corbett. However, in order trace the develop of radio as a vehicle for adult education the thesis will focus on the contributions of E.A. Corbett. There will be significant consideration and caution used to try and avoid a "great man" view of the events and times.

Definitions

Adult Education: Central to this thesis is the understanding of the term adult education.There are many definitions of the term adult education. The definition chosen for use in this study is that of C.O. Houle, found in his book, *The Design of Education.*

> Adult education is the process by which men and women, (alone, in groups, or in institutional settings), seek to improve themselves or their society by increasing their skill, knowledge or sensitivities; or it is any process by which individuals, groups or institutions try to help men and women improve in these ways (Houle, 1972, p.32).

Inductive Approach: Abrahamson suggests that in inductive approaches researchers "immerse" themselves in the documents, or in this case archival materials, in order to come up with the various dimensions or various themes which will be meaningful to the research (Abrahamson, quoted in Berg, 1989).

Deductive Approach: In a deductive approach researchers use categories or themes suggested by a theoretical perspective and the documents or materials provide means of assessing the hypothesis (Abrahamson quoted in Berg, 1989).

Abbreviations

Extension: The Department of Extension, University of Alberta. This department was organized in 1912 as a part of the University of Alberta in order to bring information and education to those people living in the areas of Alberta outside the Edmonton region.

CAAE: The Canadian Association for Adult Education. A national organization formed in 1935 to act as a clearing house for ideas for those involved in the work of adult education.

CBC: The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This radio network, opened in 1935, was, and remains Canada's national network.

CEA: Canadian Education Association. This association was formed in 1891 to serve school administrators and education department officials through interprovincial and international committees. It maintained a close affiliation with the CAAE (Faris, 1975, p. 47).

CCEC: Canadian Council for Education for Citizenship. The function of this body was to co-ordinate the various activities of adult education in the post-war world (Faris, 1975).

CIIA: Canadian Institute of International Affairs. This was an elitist voluntary association that worked with the CAAE to supply information for short educational publications and broadcasts on wartime and post wartime problems (Faris, 1975).

OISE: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

UofA: The University of Alberta, founded in 1908, with Henry Marshall Tory as its first President.

CNR: The Canadian National Railway.

CRBC: Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. This act was passed in 1934 to allow the formation of the CRBC, which was the forerunner to the CBC.

WEA: Workers' Educational Association. A movement established in Britain and introduced into Toronto in 1917. This Association worked for the co-operation between Labour and Learning. This work aimed at ensuring the cultural inheritance of civilization be made available to workers.

WIB: Wartime Information Board. This board was established in 1942 to present views and information that would move Canadians to support the government's wartime policies.

Assumptions

Any study is based upon numerous assumptions. In this section some of the dominant assumptions which are underlying this work will be addressed.

It is assumed that "the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1990, p. 278).

It is assumed that "humans act similarly across cultures and across time" (Borg, & Gall, 1989, p. 828).

The nature of historical material assumes that our understanding of the materials will be influenced by the interpretation taken by the author or authors.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There has been a general expression for the need to add to the body of literature in the area of adult education. J. Roby Kidd (1979) speaks of "yawning gaps to be filled" in the heritage of Canadian adult education. Gordon Selman (1974) notes that "considering the significance of the Canadian experience in Adult Education, it is strange--and lamentable--that we have so little historical writing in this field." Corbett is one of the significant experiences in adult education. The influence of Corbett in the field of adult education has been recognised by other scholars. Most, if not all, historical accounts of adult education would include his name. A good deal of what is known about Corbett comes from his own book, *We Have With Us Tonight.* Much of what is written about E.A. Corbett deals with his position as the first director of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, the CAAE.

David Armstrong in 1968 wrote a thesis, *Corbett's House: The Origins of the Canadian Association for Adult Education and its Development During the Directorship of E.A.Corbett, 1936-1951.* Gordon Selman in 1981 wrote, *The Canadian Association For Adult Education in the Corbett Years: A Re-evaluation.* Ron Faris, in his book *The Passionate Educators,* writes of the work done by Corbett with regard

to the establishment of the CBC.

Although the position of first director of the CAAE was a very prestigious and credible position it is important to realize that Corbett was involved in other aspects of the field of adult education. It is critical for the scholars of adult education to understand and evaluate some of the other contributions Corbett made, e.g., the development of radio.

The development of radio as an educational tool for adult and general education has had far reaching importance for international communities. Even today, communities around the developing world have copied and used Corbett's model of Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum as a means of reaching and educating people.

As far as this writer can discover there has been no attempt to draw together or to analyze the role of Corbett in the development of radio from the time that he was involved with radio as an educational vehicle for the farm families of Alberta with Extension, through the establishment of the CBC as a public utility, to the culmination of his radio efforts in Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum. The present study is an attempt to add to this knowledge.

This study is justified, firstly because of the international recognition received by the programmes, namely Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum. The study is justified in a second way because the determination and vision of Ned Corbett whose work to develop radio as a vehicle for adult education resulted in improvements in the quality of life for the citizens of Alberta, of Canada, and indirectly, of several international communities.

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

In historical theses much of the research uses the "literature" or documents as the data to be included in the context of the thesis (Merriam & Simpson, 1984). In keeping with this view the review of primary source documents, i.e., archival materials, will be dealt with in the data gathering and interpretation sections. This section will then be a review of the secondary or "related" source materials.

A search through ERIC and the university of Alberta library system revealed very little written on Corbett. Most references to him are contained in books that cover an historical overview of the development of the history of adult education in Canada. The following sources were located and reviewed.

Corbett's House: The Origins of the Canadian Association for Adult Education and its Development During the Directorship of E.A.Corbett, 1936-1951. This is an unpublished Master of Arts thesis written at the University of Toronto by David Armstrong in 1968. The thesis provides perhaps the most detailed descriptions of Corbett's work and manner of "doing business" during his time with the CAAE. Armstrong describes Corbett's networking and recruiting abilities. Although the thesis is about the workings of the CAAE, Corbett's concerns regarding radio as a vehicle for the development of adult education are dealt with briefly. Armstrong's thesis will provide a valuable source of contextual information about Corbett during the years he was director of the CAAE. It is really the only source, other than Corbett's own book, dealing in such a detailed manner with the man himself.

The Passionate Educators, by Ron Faris, written in 1975, provides particular insight into the activities of Corbett concerning his part in the struggle to have the CBC made into a public utility. Faris examines the correspondence concerning the Aird Report recommending the establishment of a national system of radio, and several reports from the House of Commons concerning the direction the development Canadian radio should follow. Faris provides solid and detailed factual evidence on the involvement of Corbett in the development of the CBC as a public utility for the education of adults in Canada. This work provide the thesis with details of the time when Corbett was working with the Canadian Radio League to influence the development of the CBC.

The Social Uplifters: Presbyterian Progressives and the Social Gospel in Canada, 1875-1915 by Brian J. Fraser written in 1988, traces the development of the social gospel theory in Canada at a time when Corbett was in his formative years. In 1906 Presbyterianism was the strongest of the Protestant denominations in Canada. This was the time when Corbett was training for the Presbyterian ministry. The work is useful to the thesis in that it positions Corbett in terms of some of the strong influences in his life that were to be a definite part of what motivated him to go out and help others. "Presbyterian progressives were concerned about employment, food, and the opportunities for the poor and the immigrants in Canada's cities and on the Western frontiers..." (Fraser, 1988, p. xiii). This book provides a clear and substantial coverage of the intellectual framework for social gospel within the Presbyterian church during Corbett's years in the Ministry: British Idealism, Biblical Criticism and the Revivalist

traditions that formed the core of social gospel rhetoric. As such it is helpful to flesh out a very substantial influence on Corbett.

The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting 1920-1951 by Frank Peers (1969), gives us a rich descriptive account of the politics surrounding the development of national radio. His account of the time is helpful as it places a perspective on the activities of Corbett and the work he was achieving for radio. The book does not deal with the development of radio at Extension in Alberta, but rather the development of what was to eventually be the CBC. The details of the politics of the period, not found in any of the other works, enriches our knowledge of the time and the work of Corbett. The book is the story of broadcasting, not adult education, and therefore does not spend many words on our story.

The Canadian Association for Adult Education in the Corbett Years: A Re-Evaluation written by Gordon Selman in 1981 presents the influence of Corbett's personal philosophy on the development of the CAAE. This monograph deals with the leadership of Corbett and how the CAAE was transformed from the original mandate of a clearing house, into an active association involved in programmes directly concerned with the business of adult education. Radio Farm Forum and Citizens' Forum are a direct outcome of this revised mandate. This study, although it does not address the development of radio, is similar to the work done by Armstrong and assists the thesis in the same fashion.

Citizenship and the Adult Education Movement in Canada, by Gordon Selman (1991), is useful in that it provides details on the development of the National Farm

Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum. Selman comments that Corbett is usually acknowledged as the person behind the creation of these two famous adult educational projects conducted in radio.

Broadcasting the Canadian Way by Albert Shea, written in 1980, treats broadcasting in Canada from the basic issue, "what are the aims and purposes of broadcasting in Canada, and how can broadcasting best be organized to achieve these objectives?" The question, public versus private control, which was the concern when the CBC was being initiated, is still the problem facing radio and television. This book looks at broadcasting as an issue, not from an historical perspective. Although this book does not specifically address Corbett's work, it provides insight into the nature of the problem facing Canadians concerning the development of radio.

Making The Truth Graphic: The Canadian Government's Home Front Information Structure and Programmes During World War II, an unpublished doctoral dissertation written at the University of Alberta by William Young in 1978, describes the role of wartime information in a liberal democracy. The development of the Wartime Information Board (WIB) faced controversy and resistance. The thesis places the Canadian Radio League as part of an "extraordinary web of friendships and interconnections" that developed during the formation of the WIB. Young maintained that these organizations were the "self-appointed promoters of a Canadian national consciousness." He goes further to say that E.A Corbett was at the head of what he describes as an "intellectual mafia." This study describes the dedication and fervour of Corbett, and those who struggled to achieve a national consciousness in Canada.

The review of the associated literature shows this research topic is not a duplication of any study done previously. The studies included in this review form a large portion of the work that in any way relates to the topic being considered. The literature reviewed indicates that others have credited Corbett with the establishment of differing aspects of educational radio but no previous work has traced the development of his involvement or completely analyzed his total contribution to the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research on the contributions of E.A.Corbett to the development of radio as a vehicle for the delivery of adult education will be conducted within a qualitative research paradigm. As noted by Borg and Gall (1989), "Historical investigation generally is considered part of the qualitative research tradition in education" (p. 806). Supporting this, C. H. Edson identifies four characteristics of historical investigation that it has in common with other qualitative research methodologies:

(1) emphasis on the study of context.

(2) the study of behaviour in the natural rather than laboratory settings.

(3) appreciation of the wholeness of experience.

(4) the centrality of interpretation in the research process (Edson, quoted in Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 806).

In the next section the research strategies and techniques are described in as

much detail as possible. It should be noted, however, that within qualitative research, the process is an evolving process. There needs to be flexibility of methodology so as to be responsive to the emerging questions throughout the process of data collection. The main issue should be whether sensible decisions regarding methods have been made, given the nature and purpose of the study being undertaken. While the design will specify a major focus, and propose plans for the primary questions to be explored, the researcher should have the flexibility to change and alter research methods as or if the need arises (Patton, 1990).

Research Site

Archival research for this study was conducted in three places. The initial site was Edmonton, Alberta: the archives and libraries of the University of Alberta, the Provincial Archives, the CKUA Archives, and the Hansard Library at the Legislature. The second site was the Archives of the CAAE, the Archives at OISE, and the Ontario Provincial Archives in Toronto, Ontario. The third site was the National Archives, and the Archives of the CBC in Ottawa, Ontario.

Data Collection

The research strategies selected for this study were influenced by the type and availability of material that can be accessed to address the research question. This study has an historical focus relying largely on information gained from the following methods: (1) informal conversations and correspondence

were conducted with adult educators. Gordon Selman was helpful in providing the writer with names and addresses of those who might be contacted for information. He also provided the writer with a list of reference material for the thesis, (2) archival material, (3) secondary sources.

Letters

Letters were written to Dr. Alan Thomas, OISE, Mr. Alex Sim in Guelph, Ontario, Dr. Ron Faris, University of Victoria, and Dr. Michael Welton. These men were informed of this thesis and asked for information regarding three things:

1) further suitable sources

2) people who knew of or worked with Ned Corbett.

3) the address of David Armstrong, who wrote the thesis on Corbett's work with the CAAE.

Primary Sources

The major sources of information for this study were original documents in the form of archival materials, and books written by the author or by contemporaries.

Archival Material

The University of Alberta Archives: in these archives are the biography files on E.A.Corbett, and the two men he worked most closely with in this endeavour at Extension, A.E. Ottewell and H.P. Brown. Also found were the files H.M.Tory kept as

President of the University. These men were involved with Corbett in the development of radio.

Housed at the University of Alberta archives are the records from the Department of Extension. In these records are the personal files of E.A.Corbett, letters and hand written copies of his radio talks. The Annual Reports of Extension written by Ottewell as director, and later by Corbett when he took over the position are also available. These archives provided the information necessary for the writing of the time Corbett was at Extension.

University of Alberta Libraries: Included in the University of Alberta Libraries are the Sir John Aird Report. This report was commissioned by the federal government in 1928 to look into the state of radio in Canada. The National Canadian Conferences of Universities reports where Corbett made representations on behalf of national radio can also be found there.

The Provincial Archives: There are a few records on H.P. Brown in these archives. This information, however, does not consider his career at Extension but rather his accomplishments at a later date in life.

Alberta Legislature Hansard Library: The 1931 resolution prepared by Corbett and passed by the Alberta Legislature in support of the nationalization of radio can be found in the Hansard Reports.

CKUA Archives: The records for the beginnings of radio CKUA were searched and provided very little in the way of information concerning Corbett and the early days of the radio station. What was interesting at these Archives was the early pictures

of the station and the people involved.

CBC Archives: These archives contain the documentation materials on the beginnings of the C.B.C. The information in the National Office of the C.B.C. was very disappointing. There was an absence of material on Corbett which led the researcher to believe that there is a body of materials somewhere or that Corbett did not, in fact, keep the records and documents that came his way. The material that was available, however, provided insight into the work done by Brooke Claxton and Grahame Spry concerning the development of the CBC.

CAAE Archives: A visit to the CAAE headquarters in Toronto, Corbett House, was once again a fruitless attempt to locate Corbett's papers. What was available here was the publication *Food For Thought.* As a result of not finding the materials at CAAE headquarters, Corbett House, and after several telephone calls the researcher made a visit to the Archives of the Provinve of Ontario.

Archives of the Province of Ontario: There were five boxes of materials in the city archives relating to the beginnings of the CAAE. In one of the boxes were some scanty records and letters of Corbett's; primarily correspondence with Grahame Spry.

Photocopies were made of the relevant materials in both Toronto and Ottawa for later reference, data analysis and interpretation.

Books

Corbett's books: *Blackfoot Trails; McQueen of Edmonton; Father, God Bless Him; Henry Marshall Tory; and We Have With Us Tonight* will constitute a large part of the primary source material.

We Have With Us Tonight forms the major contribution to the material for the thesis as it is really the only account of many of the events during this time that the writer has been able to uncover. It provides a warm, humorous, and friendly account of the political, social and economic conditions of the twenties and early thirties in Alberta, and the development of adult education throughout Corbett's active years.

Father,God Bless Him is a tribute to Corbett's father. This book contains amusing stories and glimpses into the early days of Corbett. It provides insight into the family and demonstrates the influence of Presbyterianism on the author. "He was a remarkable man and a good man, and if I have tried to be amusing about him it is because he was himself a man of fun as well as an ardent Christian."

E. Austin Weir, who was made Director for Radio for the Canadian National Railway (CN) in 1929 and later became Commercial Manager for the CBC, wrote his memoirs of *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada.* He wrote this book because "Early Canadian broadcasting is singularly lacking in historical documentation." While this is essentially a history of broadcasting with the Canadian National Railway and the CBC it gives a rich background in the context of the times.

Isabel Wilson, editor for the associated study pamphlets for the Citizens' Forum broadcast and national secretary for the greater part of the life of the

programme has written *Citizens' Forum: Canada's National Platform*. This work is a detailed account of how the programme actually operated, how it was started, who was there, and what the problems were. This is a very detailed and careful account of the issues that caused the decline of Citizens' Forum. Wilson mentions Corbett and the role he played in the formation of the project. This monograph does not deal with Corbett specifically, but more intensely with the evolution of Citizens' Forum. As such it is a valuable reference for information concerning Citizens' Forum.

Secondary Sources

The search of secondary sources results in a list of the published works of other historians who have written works which relate to the particular topic being researched. A concern when using secondary sources is that the information has already been interpreted and conclusions drawn by the various authors.

David Armstrong's master's thesis on the C.A.A.E, and Gordon Selman's *The Canadian Association for Adult Education in the Corbett Years: A Re-evaluation* provided solid information on the years when Corbett was in Toronto at the CAAE.

Ron Faris' *The Passionate Educators* provided valuable information concerning Corbett's involvement in the political and social interaction during the time of the establishment of the CBC.

The use of secondary sources completes the triangulation of the study. Work that has already been written and published can serve to reduce the potential for error that might occur from the complete reliance on archival material and further adds to

the credibility of the study.

Content Analysis

In qualitative studies, the researcher sometimes finds it necessary to move back and forth between the sources and the analysis during the period of data collection (Locke et al., 1987).

Historical resources need to be evaluated both externally and internally. This process is called historical criticism.

The first step in evaluating a document is to test its authenticity; this is sometimes known as *external* criticism. Is the author, the place and the date what they purport to be? The second and usually much more demanding stage is *internal* criticism, that is the interpretation of the documents content. Granted the author, date and places of writing are as they seem, what do we make of the words in front of us? "At one level this is a question of meaning" (Tosh, 1991, p.59).

In this study external analysis of archival materials was considered. Internal criticism took place at the content analysis stage. The process began with the information being analyzed according to a set of criteria predetermined by the researcher:

1) Various ideological mind sets

2) Themes

3) Historical context (Borg, & Gall, 1989).

The archival and written material was gathered, photocopied and coded onto

note cards. Throughout this process the researcher made notes, memos and recorded any thoughts or ideas. This is important in the last stages of interpretation of the data.

The content was analyzed and interpreted according to a set of criteria predetermined by the researcher. The various categories that were used for the analysis of content in this study were determined by an inductive approach. Abrahamson defines an inductive approach as one that begins with researchers "immersing" themselves in the documents or materials in order to identify the various themes or dimensions that seem meaningful (Abrahamson quoted in Berg, 1989).

The categories that relate primarily to the theme of the thesis are as follows: the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education as it pertains to: 1) Extension, 2) CBC, 3) Farm Radio Forum, 4) Citizens' Forum, 5) Personal philosophy, 6) Historical context.

Interpretation is of great importance in historical research. In most cases researchers must rely on information that has already been recorded by someone else. This in itself has been interpreted by those recording the situation. In other words, this material comes with a pre-existing set of biases, values or interests. Carr remarks that "The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past" (Carr, 1987, p. 55).

Thus historical sources are cloaked in interpretation before historians touch them. Historians add another layer of interpretation in the way they choose to emphasize or ignore facts about the past and in the way they fit facts into categories and patterns. As Joan Burstyn observes, history might be described as "constructed

reality" (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 806).

Findings

A brief summary and interpretation is presented at the end of each chapter. Interpretation, by definition, involves going beyond the descriptive data. Interpretation means attaching significance to what was found, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, building linkages, attaching meanings, imposing order and dealing with rival explanations, disconfirming cases, and data irregularities as part of testing the viability of an interpretation (Patton, 1990, p. 423). In this manner the findings reveal and note various patterns and observations as they relate to the thesis topic.

Conclusion

The final section of the study is a discussion of the findings and the conclusions. The main historical points on which this study is focused are discussed. This is the deductive portion of the process. This section allows for observations and insights along with suggestions for further research. At this point there is a final analysis as to the contribution made by Corbett to the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education.

STUDY TRUSTWORTHINESS

Credibility

Patton states that the credibility issue for qualitative inquiry depends on three distinct but related inquiry elements:

1) rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high-quality data that are carefully analyzed, with attention to validity, reliability and triangulation;

2) the credibility of the researcher, which is dependent on training, experience, track record, status and presentation of self; and

3) conviction that the qualitative method and the techniques of analysis and thinking are sound and correct for the study (Patton, M., 1990,).

Validity

There is always a concern about the authenticity of archival materials and documents. Borg and Gall (1989), state that one can never be completely certain about the validity of historical documents. A document may or may not have been written by the person whose name it bears. In this study there has been no reason to believe the documents are invalid; however, the writer has proceeded with caution regarding this aspect of the study (Borg, & Gall, 1989).

John Tosh (1991), states that one of the first tests of validity by which any work must be judged is in the interpretation of the past. Is the interpretation historically consistent with all the other accounts? We must be confident that the information has not been deliberately distorted. This does not preclude novel or fresh

interpretations, provided these interpretations are solidly grounded in accurate historical evidence.

Triangulation

An important method for strengthening a study design is triangulation. There is a potential for quite serious error of interpretation when studies make use of primary sources. "Many primary sources are inaccurate, muddled, based on hearsay or intended to mislead...it is a vital part of the historian's work to scrutinize the source for distortions of this kind" (Tosh, 1991, p. 33). This study will employ the use of archival materials, letters to those involved in the field of adult education, informal conversations, and secondary sources which will act as cross-data validity checks.

Peer Consultation

The researcher will review interpretations throughout the process with peers. Assistance and feedback will be sought from the advisory committee as the study proceeds and when the writer requires assistance.

CHAPTER ORGANIZATION

Chapter 1

The first chapter contains the statement of the research question and the sub-questions, the background and the introduction to the thesis, along with the necessary definitions, the list of abbreviations and assumptions, and the stated

importance of the work.

Chapter 2

The second chapter will deal with the religious, ideological, and social cultural influences which moulded the character of Ned Corbett. It will discuss his early life, his days at Khaki College and the events which led up to his appointment as assistant to A.E. Ottewell at Extension. It will examine his beliefs and attitudes about adult education and the people it served.

Chapter 3

Corbett at Extension and the development of CKUA is the subject of Chapter III. This chapter will deal with the beginnings of the development of radio as a highly successful and popular vehicle for adult education in Alberta.

Chapter 4

CBC Public or Private? Corbett, already convinced of the need for educational radio, was aware of the need for C.B.C. to be a public utility. This chapter tells of the efforts Corbett made and his contribution to ensure that it became a utility for the people.

Chapter 5

The development of the radio programs Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum form the subject material for this chapter. Corbett had noticed a programme operating in England which he thought could be very successful in Canada, especially for the isolated farmers. This chapter will talk about the development of this program and its subsequent successes. The sister programme Citizens' Forum was an offshoot

operating in England which he thought could be very successful in Canada, especially for the isolated farmers. This chapter will talk about the development of this program and its subsequent successes. The sister programme Citizens' Forum was an offshoot of the first and never quite as popular and the reasons for this will be considered.

Chapter 6

Summary and Conclusions. This chapter attempts to pull together all of the threads concerning the development of radio. It provides a final interpretation of the influence and contribution to the field of adult education made by Edward Annand Corbett using the technology of radio

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND, INFLUENCES, VALUES AND BELIEFS

Early Life

George Ferguson in his 1964 CBC broadcast when talking of Corbett described his friend as a slightly built man, who was not quite up to average height. He had a prominent beaky nose and a very firm and thrusting chin. He had keen sparkling eyes that took in the world around him with endless, often quizzical, interest. His smile was broad and generous and when he laughed, he became totally involved in the moment (CBC broadcast, 1964).

Edward Annand Corbett, B.A., B.D., M.A., L.L.D., born in Truro, Nova Scotia in 1887, was the third of eight children. Corbett grew up the son of a Presbyterian minister. His father had two absorbing passions. One was to save men from sin; the other was his love of thoroughbred horses. His father had a reputation during his ministry as a passionate preacher, and was very popular throughout the Maritime Provinces for what were known as "Special Services." These "Special Services" closely resembled Methodist 'revival' meetings, but the term was not used in the Presbyterian Church (Corbett, 1953).

Corbett's father believed his boys should be capable of hard work, and the boys always had jobs to do around the manse and in the area. "My boys have been brought up to work." After working seven hours at a local butter factory, Corbett would come home and then ride his bicycle three miles to a farmer's place where he earned fifty

cents each afternoon hoeing corn, haying or picking apples, depending on the season (Corbett, 1953).

Corbett recalls in his book, *My Father God Bless Him*, that both parents preached the gospel of education. As children there were constant reminders that they were all to plan for a university education. It never occurred to the parents that money was required in order to attend a university. In fact, his father's philosophy was that "Even if you haven't enough money to pay your registration fees, enter the university anyway" (Corbett, 1953, p.48).

Corbett saved enough money to attend Huntingdon Academy, Huntingdon, Quebec, for the tenth and eleventh grade. He referred to this school as the first "real school" he had ever attended. After two years he was unable to continue due to lack of funds. He then left school and went out west to Alberta to work with the Canadian Pacific Railway as guide, counsellor and friend to tourists in Banff (Corbett, 1953).

While working out west Corbett was able to save enough money to enter McGill University in 1904. During his third year, however, the problem of money again loomed large and Corbett found it necessary to resume outside employment in order to continue his studies. He worked on the *City Directory*, and part time as reporter for the *Montreal Star*. He earned eighteen dollars a month as night attendant in the Redpath Library. As Christmas approached he was able to earn twenty-five cents an hour clerking in Henry Birks and Sons store during the month of December (Corbett, 1953).

While at McGill, Corbett wrestled with the problem of whether to study

medicine or theology. Even though he knew there was no real pressure from his parents, he was aware that they had hoped for at least one son to follow in the footsteps of the father and become a minister. After finishing third year in Arts, Professor D.J. Fraser of the Presbyterian College recommended Corbett spend a summer on a western mission field, and promised that in his fourth year he would get him one of the several scholarships procurable for prospective theological students. Accordingly, Corbett was assigned by the Home Missions Board to a mission station. Once again Corbett found himself in Alberta, this time at the mission station at Beaver Lake (Corbett, 1953).

The combination of the hopes of his parents and the lure of the scholarship resulted in Corbett's decision to forego medicine and study for the ministry. "He did his theology on scholarships, and thus for the first time had leisure to work, so to speak, and discovered the real meaning of education" (Cox, Edmonton Journal, n.d.). When Corbett, in later years, spoke of his times in the ministry he would allude to the fact that "I have always believed that a minister of the gospel ought to have some, at least, of the attributes of Sainthood, and I was beginning to realize that I had none" (Corbett, 1957, p.219). Corbett was often quoted as explaining, "I started on the road to Damascus, but fell among educators."

In order to understand Corbett and the road he followed it is necessary to look at some of his major life experiences and to see how these influences were interpreted, how he explained them to himself, and how they affected his life. In 1907, when Corbett entered his training for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, the intellectual

framework of the church was guided by a strong social gospel influence. Three movements: Idealist Philosophy, Higher Criticism, and Urban Revivalism formed the basis of Presbyterianism in Canada in the early nineteen hundreds when Corbett was involved with becoming a minister.

SOCIAL GOSPEL

The latter third of the nineteenth century in Canada witnessed social and political upheaval which jeopardised the life of the nation. With the coming of industrialization the very nature of society as it was previously understood was challenged. The fibre of the agrarian society was stretched and torn. Political morality had slumped to unprecedented levels. Economic depression overwhelmed the country, lifting only at the end of the period.

As the nineteenth century closed, problems at home and influence from abroad began to inspire a new social attitude. Intellectual currents in the western world inflamed debate in Canadian universities and intense doctrinal discord in the churches (Allen,1961).

A faith crisis challenged many Canadian Protestants. Religious beliefs were questioned by the new biological sciences, Darwinism, and by historical criticism of the Bible. Personal salvation, for centuries the focal occupation of Christianity, no longer seemed an acceptable principle in an age that gave rise to industrial cities and overwhelming social problems. Practically every issue of the *Canadian Monthly and National Review*, the leading intellectual quarterly of late Victorian Canada, provided

articles and other evidence that this was a burning issue. Contributions from Goldwin Smith, Professor John Watson, Agnes Machar, Principal G.M.Grant, Principal William Dawson, and W.D. LaSueur, to name only the most prominent of the Canadian intellectuals at this time, on topics of science and religion, biblical criticism, positivism, and philosophical idealism appeared typically in the publications of the day. What was true of secular journals was even more conspicuous in religious publications--*The Christian Guardian, The Westminster, The Canadian Methodist Quarterly*, to name a few, ran hot debate (Cook, 1985).

When looking at Social gospel theory we find it can be divided into three categories for the purpose of clarification. The three aspects of its ideology; Idealist Philosophy, Biblical Criticism, and Urban Revival form the fundamental base for the movement..

Idealist Philosophy

Much of what can be defined as Social Gospel in Canada had its roots in Scotland. "Moral philosophy was the crown of the Scottish university curriculum" (Fraser, 1988, p. 3). At the end of the nineteenth century Edward Caird was perhaps the most influential teacher of moral philosophy in Scotland. Caird, in turn, was influenced by the writings of Kant and Hegel. Central to the teaching of Caird was the view of the relationship between God and the world.

The essential truths upon which all other truths were based for social gospel theorists was the communication of the importance of God. Everything, in its proper

proportion, was the means for the expression of the divine, and humanity was the highest and most fitting of such demonstrations. By virtue of their self-consciousness, men and women offered the finest means for the progressive understanding of truth and goodness. Evil arose through an innocence of these essential truths. "Through positive corrective action, often educational in nature, evil could be overcome and transformed into good" (Fraser, 1988, p. 4).

The theory that Caird was prescribing saw each member of society as concurrently dependent and independent. Each member was a part of the whole, each human being had a unique place and function within the social order. The purpose of society was to provide each individual with the maximum freedom of opportunity to develop his or her own capabilities. Correspondingly, an enlightened view of the common good would elicit devotion to the well-being of the society as a whole and understanding of the proper place for the talents each member enjoyed (Fraser, 1988).

Edward Caird's most promising student at the University of Glasgow was John Watson who later became Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Queen's University in Ontario and carried the teachings of Caird to Canada.

Biblical Criticism

Understandably, Biblical Criticism or Higher Criticism became one of the most contentious issues between the old Presbyterianism and the new Social Gospel advocates. "Higher Criticism was the critical study of a text in Scripture in its original

historical setting, as distinct from Lower Criticism, which endeavoured to arrive at the original text" (Fraser, 1988, p.8). George Adam Smith had studied under Caird, A.B.Davidson, and A.B.Bruce in Glasgow and published a book called *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament.* Smith was convinced that "Criticism ...was an important means of bringing the Bible to life by helping people discover its essential quality of faith" (Fraser, 1988, p.9). Smith's ideas came to Canada through the person of John Edgar McFadyen, who had studied under him in Scotland.

Critical study had substantiated that the Bible was written with a religious function and that its writers were loyal to their experiences of God and the human heart. As seen through critical eyes, the Scriptures spoke of the reality of God much more convincingly to a generation raised on science than did the doctrines that had been traditionally preached. While the latter called for mere sanction, the former, according to Smith, led to a genuine religious commitment. Modern criticism of the Bible made it a more effective means of arriving at the evangelical task of winning the minds and the hearts of the nation for Christ (Fraser, 1988).

Urban Revivalism

In 1873, Rev. Dwight Moody, a Chicago evangelist, accompanied by his musical director Ira Sankey, was invited to present a series of talks on religion in Great Britain. Moody spent two years on this mission and by the time of his death in 1899 he had gained the reputation of being the best organized and most influential

evangelist of the century. "Moody's message was an elementary one of forgiveness and love from God in Jesus Christ, with an emphasis on the practical morality of the Christian faith as an everyday discipline" (Fraser, 1988, p. 12).

While at the New College Edinburgh, Moody taught Henry Drummond who later wrote a response to Darwin's theory of evolution. In this writing he "posited an ascent of humanity based on the evolutionary principle of self-sacrificing love rather than a descent of humanity from lesser species through a random process of the survival of the fittest" (Fraser, 1988, p. 13). For many Christians, the most threatening theory to come out of the new science of the nineteenth century was this concept of Darwin's that talked of evolution. Many traditional Christians welcomed Drummond's explanations.

Drummond presented a framework for Christianity that centred on a social, as well as a personal, ideal of love, service, sympathy, sacrifice, cooperation and world community. The basis of faith for Drummond focussed on the following reforms: the capability of men and women to shape their social environment, each in his or her appointed ways, and the inevitability of evolutionary moral growth if Christian leaders accepted their responsibilities in the new social order emerging with urbanization and industrialization. These reforms would conceivably create opportunities for self-help and upward mobility for the lower classes and for the disadvantaged (Fraser, 1988).

Walter Rauschenbausch, the prominent American Social Gospel advocate and writer, noted that among the most significant tenets of modern life that necessitated revisions in religious thought were belief in four major concepts: the universal reign of

law, the doctrine of evolution, the control of nature by man, and the value of education and liberty as independent goods (Fishburn, 1981).

When Corbett entered the portals of the ministry of the Presbyterian church this blend of idealistic philosophy, critical analysis of the Bible and religious enthusiasm resulting in a strong and comprehensive conviction of faith provided the basis for his religious training. The rhetoric of his teaching was lodged in these theories and fired by these concepts. Teachers and advocates of the social gospel believed fervently that men who themselves were thrilled by the Christ-life and inspired by the Christ-spirit and constrained by the Christ-motive could and must go into the social life and into the business life and into the political life, and into all other avenues of thought and existence, and there live out the Christ-idea. It was further expounded that all that was needed was 4000 such Christ-men and Canadian civilisation in this generation could be redeemed (Fraser, 1988).

This explains briefly the tenets of social gospel theory as was communicated to those young ministers, like Corbett, who were trained as Presbyterian ministers in Canada in the early 1900s.

World War I and Dr. Henry Marshall Tory

When war broke out Corbett was already an ordained minister and working in Montreal. He had accepted a position as secretary of Strathcona Hall at McGill University, the headquarters of the Students' Union and the Student YMCA. In 1916 he joined the war effort through the University Companies and went overseas. In 1917

he was in England and later in France where he became part of the staff of Khaki College (LeCocq, 1952). Khaki College was an educational institution established and managed by the Canadian Army in Britain. The program was rooted in the study groups of the YMCA and the chaplain services of the Canadian Army. In 1918, the educational work of the college became the educational services of Canadian forces overseas under the general staff of the Canadian army (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 1988). Although not documented, it may be assumed that Corbett was influenced in this decision to join Khaki College, rather than to enlist in the regular army, by his association and work with the YMCA at McGill.

Early in 1917 there were several thousand soldiers participating in voluntary night classes which were conducted mainly as discussion groups led by chaplains and YMCA officers. Lt. Colonel Gerald W. Birks was the Supervisor of the YMCA Canadian forces overseas, with approximately two hundred commissioned and non-commissioned officers stationed at army bases scattered throughout England and France (Corbett, 1954).

While Corbett was working at Khaki College, he realised the importance for these young soldiers to continue to study to prepare themselves for the day they would return to civilian life. In a class of two hundred at Witley Camp, fifty-seven men wanted to take up the study of agriculture, thirty wanted a business education, fifteen wanted practical training in mechanics, forty wished to enter the university, eighteen wished to train as YMCA secretaries, and one to teach. The remainder were interested in studying without any particular objective (Corbett, 1954).

The great value of Khaki College was that it gave opportunities to large numbers of men to make a start, at least, in preparing themselves for the return to civil life after the war. "Reports show that from 1917 to 1919 upwards of 650,000 men attended lectures and 50,000 enrolled in classes" (Corbett, 1954, p.156).

It may be said that Khaki College is where the real seed of interest in adult education began for Corbett. There he saw the importance of education for these men and women who had been displaced by the war. In the military hospitals, where Corbett himself would later be a patient for two years, and in the field, he saw men wounded in mind and body fit themselves for normal return to civilian life through hard study and by taking advantage of the classes and vocational training that was available (Corbett, 1957).

G.C.Andrew (1967) comments that Corbett came into adult education through the side door. However, it was at Khaki College that Corbett met two men who would have a significant influence on the direction his life would take. They would, in fact, invite him through the front door of adult education and to be a part of what they were doing in Alberta. Dr. Henry Marshall Tory, President of the University of Alberta, and A.E. Ottewell, Director of Extension at the University of Alberta, had been invited to Europe to pull together and to plan the efforts that Khaki College had initiated. Ottewell was to assist and aid Dr. Tory.

The achievements and success at Khaki College "....prompted Dr. Tory on his return to Edmonton after the war, to remark that his eyes had been opened to a shortcoming in educational opportunities at home--adult education" (Edmonton Journal,

May 20/1961). Dr. Tory was determined to do something to help alleviate the situation regarding adult education in Alberta.

Wounded in late 1918, Corbett was sent home, and went to a Sanitorium in Balfour, British Columbia, to recover from the effects of an incident with mustard gas and tuberculosis. "Two years later, he had recovered enough to accept a job offer from Tory" (New Trail, Summer,1991). The University of Alberta President wrote, "If you've kept your mind alive there's a job here for you here" (LeCocq, 1952), as assistant to A.E.Ottewell at the Department of Extension in Edmonton.

Dr. Tory was an ordained Methodist minister and like Corbett had been exposed to the rhetoric of the Social Gospel. In January, 1908, Dr. Tory left McGill University and headed west to Alberta to undertake his new duties as President of a university which existed only in name. In that same month at the first convocation of the University of Saskatchewan, January 8, 1908, Salem Bland, a leading Methodist social gospel teacher, spoke on the idea of the development of a people's University. Bland advocated that a university should not be characterised by a group of narrow and crude specialists, nor a cast of intellectual Brahmins, nor an accumulation of rich men's sons, but its success should be judged by the number it graduates from the families of farmers and artisans (Allen,1961).

It is not unreasonable to assume that news of this very controversial speech circulated around the Western Canadian University community and caught the attention and the interest of Dr. Tory.

> When Dr. Tory interviewed me prior to offering me the job of assistant to Ottewell, he emphasised, as he always did, that the people of the Province paid

> for the University; and that the Department of Extension existed for the purpose of relating the thinking and the research going on in the University to the needs and demands of the people of the Province. Then he went on to say a very significant thing: 'The time may come,' he said, 'when the existence of a University will depend upon the public's assurance that its thinking and research are vital to the community ' (Corbett, 1954, p. 128).

This was to prove a compatible relationship. Robert C.Wallace writes in the foreword of Corbett's book on Henry Marshall Tory, "Together, [Tory and Corbett], in an outstanding way, they made the University the servant of the people. They worked as one." They made the University of Alberta Department of Extension a meaningful link between the community and the University.

Beliefs and Attitudes

The basic moral passion Corbett brought to the field of adult education had firm roots in family attitudes towards the value of work, the benefit of education and Presbyterian social gospel rhetoric. Added to this was

> ...the temperament that makes him lie awake all night working out the answer to a tycoon who has accused him of being a communist. He will also stay out on a lake all day till he's caught the pickerel that everyone else decided wasn't there (LeCocq, 1952, p.80).

Ned Corbett was, in a profound sense, an educator. He believed in the right of every citizen to have access to education and pursue that right to improve his lot in life. He was resolute in his belief that, once aroused, plain ordinary people would go on from there to uncover better techniques and better systems than those he was able to give (Ferguson, CBC Broadcast). Roby Kidd, when talking about Corbett after his death, reflected on some of the intrinsic values bequeathed by Corbett. "What he left is

printed nowhere, but is written between the lines of every page."

Paramount to the understanding of Corbett is the comprehension of his deep affectionate regard for human beings and an abiding concern for human values which he believed learning would unlock, defend and extend . Secondly, he imparted that state which alone makes it possible for men and women distributed over a vast country to work together--the condition of trust. The third issue concerning Corbett was the fact that learning was never obligation, it was never anticipated, it was never tedious. "For him,...learning never lacked discovery, experiment, or excitement " (Kidd, 1965, p. 40).

The notion of democracy and education were very closely aligned in Corbett's thinking. This grew from his experiences in the first world war and was firmly established by the onset of the second. Freedom to learn and to express ideas was a critical issue. Speaking at the Annual Banquet of the Ontario Milk Producers Association Corbett made the statement, "that if liberty of enquiry, exposition, and discussion comes to an end, and force is made to reign then democracy is a dead issue" (Corbett, Ontario Milk Producers Association, n.d.). He concluded his speech by stating his major thoughts on the function of education:

> ...education has three major functions to perform in preserving and unfolding democratic theory and practice. One is to cherish and defend the humane ideal on which democracy rests, equality of right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The second task of education in relation to democracy is to cherish, expound, and defend the legal institutions of democracy which assure to the humble the same standing at law as the mighty enjoy. And the third function of education in relation to democracy is that of exploring, presenting and discussing freely those conceptions of economy which are designed to assure the ways and means of life which are indispensable to the security of a democratic society (Corbett, n.d.).

Corbett was always conscious of the role of the church in his life. He had problems that made him unhappy in that role; but his drive persisted. His friend George Ferguson states that at heart Corbett was a crusader. He was driven by urges too deeply entrenched to be ignored (Ferguson, CBC Broadcast, 1964). It was his drive and commitment to improve the lot of the common person that made Corbett so determined to make adult education a vital movement in Canada. He insisted that everyone had the right of access to learning as a means, perhaps the only means, by which the average person could prepare themselves for a new social order, a means of organising the moral and ideological basis from which action could begin (Corbett, 1957).

Corbett pointed out that a lot of ministers and ex-ministers were involved in the field of adult education. The reason he gave was that in adult education there is activity in which they can express in their own peculiar way whatever passion for justice and righteousness may possess them (Selman, 1981).

Ferguson noted in his broadcast on Corbett that after he went to Toronto in 1935 to become the first director of the CAAE, he liked most to visit was Antigonish. There Fr. Coady and his followers were down among the farmers and fisher folk, doing the kind of job that Corbett had so much loved in Alberta. This work he considered to be the real thing (Ferguson, CBC Broadcast, 1964).

Nationalism

Gordon Selman (1981), notes that Corbett had strong convictions about society

and the role adult education should play in determining its future direction. Corbett was firmly convinced that the nation required informed citizens who could add to the spirit of nationalism and reconstruction after the Second World War. He was intensely interested in the survival of democracy and he believed education of adults to be a major component of the process. He was aware of the immense task facing Canadians--to build a single national identity to bring the people together, in spite of the vast geographical distances that challenged the concept. He once remarked that "Whatever may be said of Hitler and Mussolini it is obvious that they see clearly the relation between education and social and political action..." (Corbett, 1936, p.6).

Corbett was concerned that adult education was not providing the national guidance that he deemed so necessary, and in his 1941 Report charged the CAAE with being remiss in addressing their mandate. He faulted the group and accused it of timidity when it came to giving direction to the communities it served. He believed the association was acting too cautiously and being overly concerned about appearing objective. He reminded them that the origin of the adult education movement was firmly embedded in the needs of the working man and woman who were seeking a way to improve their lot in life. He insisted that adult education must remain in that line of endeavour if it was to have any significance as a force for social betterment or as a means of making democracy an effective social mechanism. Any attempt to withdraw from that position so as to make mass education fit comfortably into the dreams of conquest that reside in the minds of oppressors, is to devastate the very talent that gave the movement vitality (Corbett, 1941).

He was committed to citizenship education and worked on a national programme of citizenship training through two of the most successful programs on radio involving the whole nation in discussion on these matters so vital and topical to the era. Open and free public discussion on controversial issues of the day, he claimed, could lead those involved to the discovery of new and better ways. Corbett believed adult education to be a social philosophy, an attitude, a moral conviction that life could be vastly fuller and richer, and the world a better place to live in than it had ever been before. The method of approach to this philosophy, he insisted, was through continued, fearless and open-minded study and discussion (Corbett, 1941).

Ned Corbett, The Man

"There was an element of the promoter"[in Corbett]... "He liked new projects and new faces" (Ferguson, 1964, p.1). As Director of the CAAE he travelled the length and breadth of the land convincing people of the value of adult education. He was constantly on the move and often held meetings and planning sessions in his hotel room in whatever town or city he was visiting. He termed this "the hotel room interpretation of Canadian enterprise." In almost every undertaking in which he was involved, initial plans and strategies were frequently worked out with a small group of people in a hotel room somewhere in Canada. The major reason for his developing this strategy was that for the first ten years of his term as Director of the CAAE, a large part of life was spent in hotels from Charlottetown, P.E.I., to Vancouver, B.C. (Andrew, 1967).

This might be a possible clue to the problem of location of personal files and papers belonging to Corbett. Andrews claimed that Ned Corbett was neither a scholar nor a philosopher in the distinct sense of the word. He was a man of undertaking who learned from the human circumstances he encountered (Andrews, 1967). If Corbett was constantly on the move, and not too inclined towards scholarship, it is reasonable to conclude that this might be one of the reasons many records, letters, etc. cannot be located.

"Dr. Corbett threw his net wide" (Brockington, 1957, p.2) and gathered like-minded souls to plan and talk about the issues and problems that related to adult education. Corbett possessed a remarkable ability to network which was a crucial aspect of his success. As he travelled across the country doing the work of adult education he assembled and communicated with groups of men and women who carried on the work of educating. He guided and encouraged these young people, who wanted to make changes to the system, into situations where they could work and further the cause for adult education. According to Roby Kidd, Corbett took more pleasure in seeing the right man placed in the right position than in achieving awards or honours for himself (Kidd, 1965).

With a genuine affection for people and deep-seated belief in his fellow man, Ned Corbett possessed a down-to-earth style, reminiscent of his early days in Nova Scotia, a keen sense of humour and an amazing "inexplicable magical gift for story-telling.... Corbett won many honours, including a string of LL.Ds., but if there has been a greater raconteur in my generation, I have missed him " (Kidd, 1965, p.41).

Corbett's book, *We Have With Us Tonight* bears testimony to this fact. His vignettes of life in rural Alberta demonstrate the warm affection he had for the people of this land.

SUMMARY

Corbett never did formulate a philosophy of adult education, but he and his fellow educator Fr. Moses Coady collaborated in a fairly adequate statement of objectives concerning adult education.

a) That the individual, his rights, his moral and spiritual significance is of supreme importance in a democracy.

b) That social progress can only come about through improvement in the quality of human beings, and that improvement can only come through education.

c) That adult education functions must suit its efforts to the intimate interest of the individual or the group, and in most instances these interests are economic.

d) That adult education functions most effectively through group study and group action.

e) That the ultimate objective of all education, particularly adult education, is the development of the individual's capacity to live a fuller and more abundant life.

f) That education, like religion, can only be truly vital in the measure of its

freedom from external authority.

Corbett had "a vision of Canada and a faith and hope in its civilization and the power of its own sons and daughters to paint its pictures, to sing its songs, and to record the annals of its history and social progress" (Brockington, quoted in Armstrong, 1968, p. 62).

CHAPTER 3

CORBETT AT EXTENSION

Edward Annand Corbett joined the Department of Extension (Extension hereafter) at the University of Alberta in 1920, at the invitation of Henry Marshall Tory. He became assistant to the director, A.E. Ottewell, and threw himself enthusiastically into his new environment and the work. He delighted in the tasks set out by Extension: to encourage community solidarity, to strengthen morale for those isolated by distance or weather, and to awaken the civic conscience of the pioneer. The work was conducive to Corbett's convictions and to his background. He relished the lively discussions late at night in small country school houses around the Province. He enjoyed the frequent travel in the Model "T" Ford over bad roads, with books, lantern slides and motion pictures, to meet with farmers and their families who were eager for the information and materials he brought to them (Armstrong, 1968). Adult education in Alberta offered Corbett an opportunity to deploy creatively the missionary zeal he had inherited from his father and the social gospel training of his pre-war life.

> These were the days of Henry Wise Wood and the United Farmers of Alberta: the cities were small and the farm populations very big and mostly very poor. The villages were small and the roads bad and Corbett knew them all (Ferguson, 1964, p.2).

Thelma LeCocq, in an article on Corbett quotes, "He sold education, if not exactly from door to door, at least from town to town " (LeCocq, 1952, p.81).

In a letter written to Reverend Wylie Clarke, D.D. of Saskatoon, September 7,1922 (Corbett had been ordained in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, in 1912), he requested

to have his name placed upon the appendix of the Edmonton Presbytery. The work that he was doing for Extension required him to be about the Province a great deal, and he found he was often called upon to perform the duties of a clergyman (Corbett, 1922). It was these experiences in Alberta that he remembered to later form material for his book *We Have With Us Tonight.*

Together Ottewell and Corbett were a dynamic team taking adult education to those in rural Alberta. Corbett states that ..."one was caught up and exhilarated by the spirit of change which lived like wine in the air in the early twenties" (Corbett, 1957, p.103). Dr. Tory, in a letter to one of his close friends overseas, Capt. David Corbett, written on May 29, 1922, "Ed Corbett is with us now on the University staff as secretary to the Department of Extension....I think that he has really found himself " (Tory, 1922, p.1).

Early Beginnings of Radio

In 1921, H.P.Brown, who was in charge of visual aids at Extension, visited the United States for summer holidays. He went to get some further experience in photography, but while he was in Pittsburgh he heard one of the early broadcasts of radio station KDKA. Brown became fascinated with this new gadget and upon his return built himself a homespun receiving set to pick up and listen to the increasing number of stations starting in the United States. Excited about the tremendous possibilities for spreading Extension programs around the Province, Brown approached Ottewell regarding the capability of radio (Grant MacEwan College, 1974, p. 21).

Ottewell, who had grown up in rural Alberta, could see the potential for radio as a valuable medium for reaching those isolated Albertans. He could see the benefit for those who needed a release from the hard grind and the loneliness and isolation of everyday work on the farm and in the home (Corbett, 1957). However, he felt the time was not yet right. Considering the events of the day, there are perhaps three possible reasons for this hesitation:

a) one of the reasons might have been the fact that University authorities realised that radio was so new the initial equipment would be soon obsolete, and it would be wise to wait a year or two before embarking on the experiment (Brown, n.d.).

b) the second reason may have been that in 1921 the Liberal Government of the Hon. Charles Stewart was defeated and a Farmers' Government elected. This was not considered a politically expedient time to launch such a new endeavour.

c) the third reason may have been the fact that Ottewell and Corbett knew Dr. Tory was very involved in the establishment of a Medical School at the University of Alberta (Corbett, 1954).

In addition, Corbett was not as thrilled or convinced about the use of radio as Ottewell or Brown. "I, as Assistant Director of the Department, was sceptical and slightly contemptuous of the whole undertaking" (Corbett, 1957, p. 51). He talked of radio fans, probably Brown, who were continually

> bursting into your office in the morning to tell you that the night before he got Kalamazoo or some other absurd place, and if by chance he heard a short-wave station from abroad he was raving made [sic] for several days (Corbett, 1931 c, p. 2).

Corbett recalls, "We continued to experiment with every new educational device we could find" (Corbett, 1954, p.128). It was only a matter of time before Corbett would be "caught up" and radio would become one such device. In the fall of 1924 Ottewell, Corbett and Brown judged that radio was worth an experiment, and it was "decided to make at least a gesture in the direction of educational broadcasting " (Corbett, 1935, p.2).

The question these men asked themselves was:

> Could the Radio, the new science, be used to still further extend the walls of the University until the dream of its founders would be realized and all the people in the Province could if they so desired turn naturally to the University for entertainment, for instruction, and for an answer to the problems ever before the western farmer and business man (Corbett, 1935, p.1).

With this dream in mind the radio pioneers decided on a gamble. At this time there was little or no precedent to follow. Those involved in radio, "like ourselves, were only toying with the idea." The Department began "in a somewhat halting and uncertain fashion to feel its way over this new and untravelled territory" (Corbett, 1935, p.2).

Edmonton Journal Station, CJCA

Arrangements were made in the Fall of 1925, with the Edmonton Journal Radio Station CJCA, for the University to broadcast lectures or talks by University professors. These speakers were asked to donate their time, leave their classrooms and research work to travel to the Edmonton Journal building in order "to stand before a small round disk and speak for 20 minutes to an unseen audience without other reward

than the doubtful satisfaction of having done something worthwhile" (Corbett, 1935, p.3). "The following year a microphone and amplifier were installed in a corner of the Director's office in the Department of Extension at the University with a telephone line hook-up to the Journal station" (Brown, n.d., p.1).

The programs, mainly live, were quite ambitious. There were fifteen-minute talks, delivered mostly by staff members of the University of Alberta; recordings of symphonic music with commentaries; national evenings of lively song, poetry and readings; orchestral concerts organized by Mrs. J.B. Carmichael, conductor of the University orchestra; and variety shows arranged by Mr. R.R. Couper (Villy-Cormack, 1972).

Ottewell reported in his Department of Extension Annual Report on August 20, 1926 that,

> ...we have received from all parts of the province and from different parts of Canada and the United States many letters of appreciation of our programs...In order to lighten the burden of acknowledging this correspondence, we have had a post card prepared.

Radio was showing considerable promise. "The rapidity with which that listening public grew soon made it apparent that there had been discovered the most adequate means of reaching people the human race had yet evolved " (Tyson, 1926, p. 24). This was an exciting notion for men with missionary zeal. They knew and appreciated what the life of the pioneer in winter was all about. The concept of being able to reach so many Albertans with educational talks and good quality entertainment was exciting and rewarding.

A letter received from William Best at this time states:

> The organ recital of this evening came in better than any organ music we have heard before. It was a great treat and you and Dr. McMillan and C.J.C.A. can congratulate yourselves. It is mighty fine after hauling manure all day, when you are dead beat, to lie on the sofa and undo your flannel shirt at the neck, kick off your rubbers, and clap on the earphones. Oh! boy! but it's fine! (Best, (n.d).

The programs had been such a success the Department of Extension was keen to continue to expand their programming. Owing to the increasing costs of broadcasting, CJCA felt that they could not continue to give the University programs on the air free of charge, especially as the University was looking to increase broadcasting hours. As a result, in 1925, Ottewell, Corbett and Brown were able to persuade Dr.Tory to allow them to proceed with the building of a radio station at the University (Corbett, 1954).

Radio Station CKUA

The Farmers' Government then in power was quick to realise the value of such a medium. The needs of those in remote parts of the Province, beyond the reach of University resources of entertainment and practical help, could be met for the first time. Corbett and Ottewell convinced Premier Brownlee of the ability of the radio station to reach as far as the Peace River country and to broadcast into schools and homes. The Government made available a grant for $5,000 to build a transmitter on campus (Thomas, 1936).

Notwithstanding this decision by the administration, the task of building a radio station at the University of Alberta was not to be so simple. There was a matter of obtaining an operating license. When Ottewell wrote to Ottawa and applied for a

license, Extension was refused on the grounds that there were already three licenses operating in Edmonton and that was considered to be adequate. However, that was not sufficient reason to deter the radio pioneers. A sum of six hundred dollars was somehow raised and the radio license was purchased from CFCK, Radio Supply Company (McCallum, 1967).

Dr. Tory then wrote to Mr. Alex Johnson, the Deputy Minister of Marine and Fisheries in Ottawa, with the following information:

> On enquiry here, we find that one of the licenses already in use in Edmonton could be secured by us along with the essential equipment in connection with it. We have made with the people here an arrangement to take over this license, subject of course to the sanction of your Department in the usual way. I may say that we are exceedingly anxious to get a station at the University as the calls upon us have been very great especially from the country. The work carried on by us will be of a purely educational character, the only organization here doing that sort of work (Tory, 1927, p.1).

The group at Extension had applied for the call letters to be CUOA, "U.O.A." to stand for the University of Alberta. The authorities advised, however, that the first two letters "CU" were given to another country and after much controversy the letters CKUA were agreed upon (McCallum, 1967).

This undertaking and experimentation in the field of radio was unique in Canada. The Extension group of Ottewell, Corbett and Brown went about constructing their radio station on very limited funds. Radio CKUA has been described by many as the radio station constructed on a shoe string by people with vision and dedication. Those most concerned with its beginnings realized that radio had an important role to play in adult education and they tackled it with missionary zeal. "They were people

who had a vision and to such people no real difficulties exist" (Ahmad, 1991, p.81).

H.P. Brown talked about the problems of setting up the new space.

> One of the hurdles of starting up CKUA was where to locate the radio station itself. No space could be found for the radio station anywhere else on the campus so we had to provide it on our already crowded visual instruction floor. Thus we lost our screening room which was divided into a control room and speech studio, and by moving the partitions and desks around in the main office we created a space of 15 feet by 30 feet for a main studio (Brown, 1952, p.102).

The studio was in what is now known on campus as The Power Plant. The walls of the studio were draped in burlap, for sound proofing, which was purchased from a local brewery for the sum of $25.00. The studio contained a grand piano and some chairs.

The electrical engineering students at the University and a radio engineer from Calgary named W.W.Grant became involved with the building of the radio transmitter and antenna for the new station. The two tallest farm windmills that could be purchased were obtained (80 feet topped by 20 feet iron poles to make them 100 feet). The antenna was attached to these. This apparatus stood on campus until 1966. All of these assorted items cost about $2,000.00. The 500 watt transmitter and towers were installed, "along with a small shack south of Athabasca Hall" (McCallum, 1967, no pagination). With all of this the new station was ready (McCallum, 1967).

Corbett announced during his Radio Talk on October 17, 1927 that the station was due to open on Thanksgiving Day, November 7, 1927. There appears to have been a delay as,

> It was November 21,1927. The cue was given, and the first chords of a Chopin etude filled the room and filtered through the microphone into the air. At the

> same time, H.P.Brown determined to record on film the birth of his dream, ignited his pan of magnesium flash powder-and the burlap covering on the walls burst into flame! (Kirman, J., 1977, p.9).

With this unfortunate beginning the "Voice of the U," Edmonton radio CKUA was on the air. Fortunately, this incident in no way overshadowed the future of the development of CKUA. Papers all over the country announced the event. The editorial in the Manitoba Free Press, Winnipeg, Feb.13, 1928 wrote,

> In Alberta the university has set up a station of its own--CKUA--and every Monday and Thursday the "U" is on the air. And out of the air its message is picked up north to the Yukon, south to Texas, east through Saskatchewan and west to the Pacific--an extension department of some size.

The educators at Extension were fulfilling the mandate of the Department far beyond boundaries they had ever envisaged.

Governance

Since inception, the Department of Extension was governed by a Senate Committee of the University. During the war years the Senate rarely met. Extension however, was active and by the early 1920s Tory and Ottewell decided to change the Senate Committee. In May of 1921, a motion submitted by Tory and drafted by Ottewell advocated that the ruling body for the Department of Extension, the Senate Committee on University Extension, be dispensed with and a new one formed. The new Committee would consist only of the Director of Extension, the President of the University, and any other members that the Extension Director and/or the President of the University deemed suitable.

In a report written in December of the same year to the Senate, Ottewell stated

that the Department "has been placed on an independent basis, being responsible to the President" (Ottewell, 1921, quoted in Clark, 1985, p. 96).

When the University of Alberta Extension Department received its operating license the ownership of the new radio station was placed in the hands of the Governors of the U of A (Zolf, 1984). In January, 1927, Ottewell asked the General Faculty Council (GFC) of the University of Alberta to appoint a committee to oversee the business of the radio lectures. "In February, the GFC moved that Tory appoint a Radio Broadcasting Committee" (Minutes of the GFC, February 28, 1927, quoted in Clark, 1985, p. 131). On May 7, 1927, Tory moved that a Senate Committee on University Broadcasting with Ottewell and Corbett serving as Chairman and Secretary respectively, be established. The Committee met for the first time that day. This Committee did not report to the Senate (Clark, 1985).

Responsibility for extension work was nominally entrusted to the Senate Committee on University Extension, which consisted of the University President, Ottewell, Corbett, the University Librarian and the Extension Librarian. "There is no evidence to indicate it ever met formally" (Clark, 1985, p. 154). The department of Extension was not subject to deliberation in the Senate, although Annual and Semi-Annual Reports were presented through the President (Clark, 1985).

With the governance firmly within the grip of the Director of Extension and a few chosen members, decisions on policy and programming could be, and were easily determined. Corbett had been a member of the Senate Committee on Extension since its inception in 1921. He was also a member of the Committee on radio broadcasting.

Education by Radio

From the beginning those involved, and Corbett especially, realised that a programme in adult education like any other commodity had to be sold to the audience, and that a certain amount of showmanship was necessary to encourage its development and acceptance. "It was difficult to find the correct balance of information and vaudeville ability to hold the attention of a country audience " (Corbett, 1931 a, p. 3). The situation was further complicated by the fact that the studio was not sound-proof. "Every car horn and barking dog and passing plane could and did go on the air..." (Brown, 1955, p.18).

> On one occasion, a play about the Indian Mutiny was being played. After the line, 'Hark, I hear Bagpipes,' the next record was not ready so the audience heard instead the CPR on the high level bridge giving two long and two short whistles (Ahmad, 1991, p.81).

If the concept of radio as a vehicle for education was to work, many changes would be necessary. Lecturers would have to learn to do things differently... "a new art must be developed in keeping with the character of the new science " (Corbett, Minutes of proceedings and evidence, Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting, April 18, 1932, p. 257). Material would have to be presented in such a way as to make the listener want to listen to the end of the programme (Corbett, 1935, p. 3).

Corbett was especially determined that programming be consistent and of high quality. He recognized that high-class entertainment was a legitimate field for an educational institution. He was particularly resolute that music and plays be entertaining and of a higher quality than those received from commercial stations. He saw this as one of the functions of an educational program: to deliver quality

enrichment to those in rural communities. Corbett, in his interview with Alan Thomas, February 1936, noted that the Carnegie Corporation had given CKUA three thousand symphony and grand opera recordings. This enabled the station to broadcast fine music every evening, between seven and eight o'clock. The music was uncluttered with talk or announcements other than introductory remarks.

Corbett was often heard complaining about the quality of music on the American commercial stations. He was especially hard on the "oceans of jazz" and the "Knights of the Wobbling Larynx," otherwise known as tenors.

> Mr. Vallee really needs only four words in addition to his orchestra to earn his $5000,00 a night, or whatever they pay him....I think this depression would soon end if we could lead all these 'moaning tenors' out into the cold grey dawn on a winter's morning when it's 40 below and leave them there till they've got it all out of their systems (Corbett, 1931 c, p.5).

Perhaps his disdain for popular music was a notion grounded in his Presbyterian upbringing? Another important aspect of the work of radio for the farmer in Alberta was delivered by the technical and research department of the University. Information on insect pests, plant diseases, crop and live-stock production problems, and seasonal talks on poultry, bee-keeping, gardening, tree-planting and pig farming, and discussions on mechanical problems of farm power and machinery were part of the radio programming. Farmers wrote hundreds of letters testifying to the value of this work, stating how often this information had saved them money.

On March 31, 1928, just four months after CKUA commenced broadcasting, Ottewell wrote in his Annual Report for the Department of Extension, "There is no doubt that expansion of our radio program in particular has been much appreciated by

the people of Alberta, and there is a wide field of usefulness still to be developed in this line of work" (Department of Extension, Annual Reports, 1928, n.p.).

In 1928 when Corbett took over from A.E.Ottewell as director of the Department of Extension, he was truly convinced that the future of adult education was firmly entwined with the development of radio. "Space has been annihilated and thousands of listeners, in the comfort of their homes, regardless of distances or weather, are able to hear the world's best music and benefit by lectures on a wide variety of subjects" (Corbett, n.d., p.4). Corbett had, in addition to these programs, initiated a Question Box Period, whereby farmers were invited to send in questions on their problems. The questions would be dealt with by experts in the different departments and answered on the succeeding evenings' programming (Corbett, 1927, p.4).

Corbett became most interested in expanding radio through the Department of Extension. He was interested in developing courses to be offered specifically with adult education as the major focus. He believed that if these courses were properly handled they could help in changing the attitude "of the masses of the people from one of indifference and often antagonism towards the University, to one of affection and loyalty," thereby fulfilling the dream of its founders (Corbett, n.d., p.9). In addition, such courses would meet that increasing hunger for information characteristic of young and growing countries.

The following year, 1929, Corbett in his Annual Report for the Department of Extension wrote:

> Our radio work has been greatly expanded this year, and we have been on the air regularly Monday and Thursday afternoons and evenings with special broadcasts at other times. After one or two Sunday programs had been put on, so many requests for their continuance were received that Sunday afternoon broadcasts of music, lectures, and religious drama have become a regular part of the radio work.There is no doubt that expansion of our radio program in particular has been much appreciated by the people of Alberta, and plans are being made to put on special courses for adults next term (Department of Extension Annual Reports, 1929, no pagination).

The expansion continued and a year later in his Annual Report to the Department of Extension, on March 31, 1930, Corbett reported on the increasing portion of the radio segment of Extension. The highlight, however, of the 1930 report was the experiment in delivery of definite courses. Dr. E.K.Broadus (Professor of English), and Dr.R.K.Cameron gave a course on English Literature, W. Everard Edmonds, M.A., and Corbett gave a course on Western Canadian History.

> The reports received on these broadcasts have fully justified the experiment and we are planning to continue this work next season as we are fully convinced, from the work that has already been done, that broadcasting is likely to take a more and more important place as one of the greatest agencies in adult education (Department of Extension Annual Reports, 1930, p.4).

Corbett, in an effort to try to estimate how many people were listening to his lectures on Western Canadian History, had a number of maps printed. He announced during one broadcast that anyone who took the time to write and request a map would receive one free of charge. He received close to 500 requests for maps. He estimated that even more people were listening to Dr. Broadus' talks on English Literature (Corbett, 1931 c).

It was in 1930 that Corbett attended the first Institute for Education by Radio at the University of Ohio. At this conference Corbett was amazed to find that in Alberta

radio programming had proceeded along very comparable lines to those employed by the universities in the United States with similar programs in educational radio. What interested and excited him even more was the fact that at CKUA programming had been achieved by volunteers willing to donate their time to be involved. The electrical engineering students kept the equipment running and the lines were supplied free of charge by the Alberta Government's telephone system (Feir, 1940, p.176). All of this contrasted sharply with the program at the University of Ohio where there was a $10,000.00 budget for operating costs.

In his Radio Talk on October, 29, 1930 Corbett announced this finding and thanked all of the volunteers, "the musicians and artists and lecturers of the City of Edmonton and to those members of the university staff who so generously give their time and talents to this kind of work" (Corbett, 1930, p.2).

In 1930 Sheila Marryat was appointed as the first paid Program Director of CKUA. She brought to Extension an abundance of energy and motivation coupled with a practical knowledge of drama and music. She organized and directed a group called the CKUA players. It consisted of some 30 to 40 members and was probably the first such group to pioneer in this field in Canada. The plays she presented, many of them the work of local playwrights, notably Elsie Park Gowan and Gwen Pharis, won wide acclaim (Villy-Cormack, 1972).

The Carnegie Grant

CKUA flourished during the next few years, in spite of the fact that these were the Depression years. The reason for the expansion was linked primarily to a grant

from the Carnegie Foundation. In 1932, Dr. Learned of the Carnegie Corporation of New York,came to Extension to see what was happening in terms of adult education. He was so impressed he suggested that the University submit a proposal for funding. A committee consisting of Corbett, Dr. J.M. MacEachran (Department of Philosophy), Dr. W.G. Hardy (Department of Classics), and Dr. R.C. Wallace (President of the University), met to make recommendations.

The committee was successful in securing a promise of $10,000 per year for three years. This was later renewed for two additional years, making a total of $50,000. "Alberta, particularly the rural part of it, received good value from the Carnegie grant" (Villy-Cormack, 1972, p.12).

Programming increased to seven days per week. Courses of instruction were increased to allow students, who because of the economic times were forced to remain at home, access to learning. These young people could, by means of these broadcasts receive the equivalent of university degree courses. No credit was ever given or considered for these courses. The Press Bulletin (the Department of Extension's publication) began publishing the CKUA program guide every three months for the benefit of rural listeners (Ahmad, S., 1991). Extension earned much praise and recognition for the quality of its programming during these hard times. In 1931, in his radio talk "The Place of Radio in Education," Corbett stated, "We have good reason to be proud of the fact that we are the only University in the Dominion that has gone in for this kind of work on such a large scale" (Corbett, 1931 a , p. 3). Armstrong (1968), comments that at this time the Extension Department enjoyed the prestige of

having one of the largest and most innovative programs in the country.

In the summer of 1931 Corbett organized a questionnaire to be sent out to all on the mailing list, asking for comments and suggestions. He was curious to know what it was that his subscribers needed in their radio listening, and how CKUA could best improve service to its listening audience. He was pleased to report in October, "The general opinion seems to be that the programme as it stands, constitutes a well-balanced arrangement of entertainment and educational features " (Corbett, 1931, p.1).

Corbett reported in his Annual Report of March 31, 1931:

> We are now convinced that if our lecture program is to increase in value there must be some form of follow-up work, such as the organizing of discussion groups in connection with the various series of broadcast talks. Development along this line would mean an increased interest in the medium of adult education (Department of Extension Annual Reports, 1931, p.6).

Problems in Radio

As radio stations in the United States increased in power and numbers, the smaller Canadian stations found they could no longer transmit as far as had been previously possible. Corbett reported a number of letters received from listeners complaining that they were unable to receive CKUA because of this interference. Faced with the dilemma of shrinking boundaries, those at CKUA began to search for new solutions. Networks of smaller stations became one way of dealing with the matter.

In October of 1930 station CKLC at Red Deer, owned and operated by James Stewart, Alberta Pacific Grain Company, Limited, became associated with CKUA. The simultaneous broadcasting by both stations would greatly extend the listening fields.

Corbett explained in his Annual Report of March 1931, that if CKLC had not co-operated with CKUA it would have resulted in a greatly reduced listening audience due to the fact that many U.S. stations had increased their power tremendously, and that the University station having only 500 watts could not compete and was interfered with by these high-powered stations.

In June of 1923 the CNR had established a radio department and had equipped some of its parlour cars with radio-receiving sets to entertain its passengers on its long distance runs. The programs it broadcast were ambitious and of high calibre, e.g., in 1929 the Toronto Symphony Orchestra was contracted to perform a series of twenty-five Sunday afternoon concerts to be broadcast nationally (Peers, 1969). Corbett was happy to join with the CNR in order to gain access to such high-quality items.

Further to these affiliations came the formation of the Foothills Network which consisted of stations in Lethbridge, Red Deer, Calgary and CKUA. This network was connected by the Alberta Government Telephones and shared such programming features as music and speakers. Corbett wrote in a letter to E. Austin Weir in 1933 that "the foothills network is going to show Canada the way in good programs, inside of two years" (Corbett, letter to Weir, 1933).

New Directions

Corbett's Annual Report to the Department of Extension in 1932 stated that, in spite of the obstacles under which the radio work was being done," we can definitely say that it is filling a real need in the life of the Province." The following extracts

from a letter received expresses this:

> Unquestionably, the University programs are the ones that are being taken seriously, and the others--and this includes the States' programs--are being considered as casual and transitional and more of a novelty, but the University programs have become a definite part of the daily life of the people (Department of Extension Annual Report, 1932, p.5).

Corbett reported a new development in educational radio work, i.e., an experimental course in French phonetics, given by Professor Hector Allard. Initially, "we circularized 50 High School principals asking if they would co-operate with us in the effort "(Corbett, 1935, p.4). There was an immediate response of 25 groups of students who would meet with their instructors two afternoons per week to learn French by radio. After the first broadcast 1500 letters flooded the station requesting the mimeographed materials (Department of Extension Annual Reports, 1932, p.7).

A week after the course started Corbett received an indignant protest from a large group of Calgary business men who claimed that if the hour were changed to 9:00 p.m. there were several hundred men in Calgary who would like to take the course. Corbett assured them of his plan, "Next year we will arrange a similar course for business at a late hour " (Corbett, Minutes of proceedings and evidence, special committee on broadcasting, April 1, 1932, p. 258).

A foreman from a mine in Castor, Alberta wrote:

> The men under my charge are a mixture of French and English. We all come up from the mine at 4:45 so as to be ready for your lecture at 5 o'clock. The English men are learning to speak French and the French learning to speak more correctly (Corbett, Minutes of proceedings and evidence, special committee on broadcasting, April 1, 1932, p.259).

Corbett, in his presentation to the Special Parliamentary Committee on Radio

Broadcasting, mentioned that CKUA broadcast a great many programmes of Ukrainian folk-songs and dances. The Ukrainian Choir of Edmonton performed for these broadcasts. Alberta had, at that time, 70,000 persons of Ukrainian descent living in the Province and they too turned to CKUA to meet many of their practical problems. Groups of teachers would gather children by the radio on Thursday nights to listen to the Canadian History programming. The following day, in class time, the children would be required to write compositions in English on the story they had heard the previous night. "Here again the opportunity new Canadians have in this way of learning correct English is surely a worth-while service to the strangers within our gates (Corbett, 1932 a, p.259).

The fact that these lectures and broadcasts were considered valuable to the people of Alberta is evidenced by the fact that in 1931 at the United Farmers of Alberta (U.F.A.) Annual Convention, farmers of the Province passed a resolution asking the Provincial Government to proceed with the building of a 5000 watt radio station, so as to extend the lectures to cover the whole of Alberta. The following year a delegation of school trustees, appointed by the Alberta School Trustees Association, went to President Wallace (President of the U.of A.) urging him to increase the power of the radio station so as to reach all corners of Alberta (Corbett, 1935, p.6). This is especially significant when we consider the nature of the times. This was the Depression when money was scarce and programmes of expansion were put on hold.

It was in 1933 that Corbett submitted to the Department of Extension his Annual Report stating that the teaching of languages over the radio was no longer an

experiment. It had been successful, and it would seem regrettable to have to discontinue it when each year it could be expanded to engage a larger and more interested class of students.

> During the past year there has been a greatly increased demand for the Press Bulletin giving details of our radio programs. This indicates that there is a steadily growing appreciation of, and interest in the University program. We feel justified in reporting a significant advance in our lecture programs from the point of view of listener appeal, our policy being to broadcast talks on live current issues. That this has been appreciated is shown by the following remark taken from a letter:
> Education in the past has been a kind of backing process. We have had our faces to the past and our backs to the future. The debates on live current topics, together with the series, 'The World Today,' and other talks mark a new era in public life and reveal a future when the most fitted shall guide our destinies (Department of Extension Reports, 1933,p.6).

SUMMARY

Corbett was firmly convinced that in radio education had found a new and powerful ally which could be used to bridge the great gulf fixed between the University and the people outside its walls. He could see how people could be drawn to education by radio as naturally as pilgrims towards a shrine. These programs led towards the goal of the attainment of a richer and broader life (Corbett, 1932 b, p.6). In this conviction he was never far from his social gospel origins.

Corbett had seen radio as a powerful tool for delivering education and worked energetically to develop and deliver programs of high quality to enrich the lives of rural Albertans. As a member of the Committee on University Extension he was easily able to control and initiate policy which enabled him to present and expand new and

innovative ideas for radio programming. This aspect of Extension was easily manipulated by Corbett.

Corbett believed that people had, within themselves, a craving for knowledge and the potential to recast that knowledge into the means of bettering the conditions of their situation (Campbell, 1967). He saw in radio a means to ensure the right of even those who were otherwise isolated by distance or weather to have access to this challenge.

Corbett sought to fulfil the vision of Tory and the founders of the University, to deliver the University to the people; and he succeeded, through radio, far beyond his dreams. He realised the need to encourage people to speak out and to express ideas and ideals and it is a curious thing that even in the 1920s Corbett was beginning to formulate the plan for the most powerful use of radio for education, the combination of listening groups and learning.

CHAPTER 4

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CBC

Around the end of the 1920s, nation-wide stirring began regarding the future of Canada's radio programs. There was a general feeling of frustration and confusion concerning the basic purpose of broadcasting, inadequate monies to sustain the small stations that were already in operation and intense competition from the larger, privately run American stations. There were no clear government policies in place and a bitter religious controversy raged among those connected with radio. The latter concerned the broadcasting of religious speeches which were often highly charged attacks on rival sects and denominations. Radio was seen as a wonderful and opportune chance for spreading the gospel (Weir, 1965). As this conflict gathered momentum, many, including Corbett, realised that something had to be done if radio was ever to develop into a useful method of communication or education.

Corbett, who had considerable experience with the development of radio, and who had expressed firm ideas concerning the place for radio in adult education, was intensely interested in the issue. He became actively involved in the struggle over the place of radio in Canadian society. Corbett's concern was that if Canadian radio developed along private lines it would be disastrous for adult education. Night-time programming was, as he determined, best suited to adult programming, but for the same reasons, it was also prime time for advertising. He was irritated and annoyed by

toothpaste advertising, corn plaster remedies and "Easy-Rest Mattresses" (Corbett, 1931 c, p. 1) which formed a large part of night time radio from the States. All of this made him determined that radio should be developed along lines that were strictly Canadian in nature and educational in orientation.

The Aird Commission

After considerable pressure from concerned citizens, like Corbett, over the issues of religion and the competition for air space from the United States, the House of Commons provided money in June of 1928 for a Royal Commission "to inquire into the radio broadcasting situation throughout Canada, and to advise as to the future administration, management, control and finance thereof " (Peers, F, 1975, p. 62). On December 6th of the same year, the Liberal Government of Mackenzie King set up this Royal Commission. It involved three men: Sir John Aird, President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce; Dr. Augustin Frigon, Director-General of Technical Education of the Province of Quebec, Chairman of the Electrical Commission of the City of Montreal, and a member of the National Research Council; and Charles Bowman, Editor of *The Ottawa Citizen*. Donald Manson was appointed secretary (Weir, 1965).

Of the three men appointed to the Commission only Bowman had thought about radio. He publicly supported a system set up along lines similar to the British Broadcasting Corporation (Faris, 1975). Frigon and Aird had little previous experience or interest in the subject. Aird announced at the first meeting, "Of course, I know

nothing about radio. I used to have a radio in the house, but I threw the damn thing out" (Aird quoted in Nash, 1994, p. 55). The attitude of the Commission changed dramatically, however, after they visited the United States to view the American situation. Frigon and Aird were shocked by the plans of NBC and CBS to extend and expand their radio networks across Canada (Nash, 1994).

The Aird Commission then travelled to Britain, Germany, France, Holland, Ireland, Switzerland, Denmark and Belgium to observe what was being done in those countries with radio. "Everywhere in Europe we found inquiries being conducted under government auspices for the purpose of organizing broadcasting on a nation-wide basis in the public interest" (Weir, 1965, p.107). Both Britain and the United States had recently introduced legislation concerning radio. Corbett was convinced that Canada should follow the British model and set up a publicly run network. He had been impressed by reports of the way the BBC organized its educational programs.

After the Commission returned to Canada, public sessions were held concerning the future of radio. Sir Henry Thornton, President of the CNR, made a rail car available to the Commission to facilitate its investigations as it travelled across the country (Weir, 1965). Twenty-five cities were visited including all nine provincial capitals. In total 164 verbal and 124 written submissions were received. Three universities made presentations (Aird Report quoted in Faris, 1975). Corbett was very involved with the presentation from the University of Alberta. He co-sponsored the motion that came from the National Conference of Canadian Universities supporting a "policy of dominion-Provincial co-operation to control Radio Broadcasting, and the

advisability of university representation on the programme organization committee" (NCCU, Proceedings of the 13th Conference, quoted in Faris, 1975, p.64).

In 1929, the Aird Commission reported: "There was unanimity on one fundamental question--Canadian radio listeners want Canadian broadcasting" (Weir, 1965, p.108). The Commission was excited with broadcasting and its capacity as a vehicle for the education of Canadians. "Radio could become a great force in fostering a national consciousness and unity" (Weir, 1965, p.108). The Aird Commission recommended the establishment of a national, publicly owned company, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Company, to hold and conduct the business of all broadcasting stations (Faris, 1975).

Corbett's support for the recommendations of the Aird Report was enthusiastic. In June, 1930, at the first Institute for Education by Radio at Ohio State University, Corbett emphasized the desire of Canadians for a national system of radio.

> All this lies back of the desire on the part of the Canadian people to establish a system of radio broadcasting which will enable us throughout Canada to enjoy distinctly Canadian programs, to establish in our children Canadian ideals of education and of conduct, and to bring up the future citizens of Canada united in their consciousness of national unity and independence...We want to provide them with Canadian programs which will equal in quality the best that we get from the United states, and we want also to have a system sufficiently powerful to shut out the cheaper and shoddier programs with which we are constantly flooded by stations in the United States (Corbett, quoted in Faris, 1975, p.66).

While the outcome of the Commission was welcomed by Corbett it was not universally popular. One organization that came out strongly against the Report was the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, CAB. This group was formed in 1926 as a trade association consisting of private radio operators and the CNR. The aim of this

society was,

> ...to foster and promote development of the art of aural and visual broadcasting in all its forms, to protect the members of the Association in every lawful and proper manner from injustice and unjust exactions, and to do all things necessary and proper to encourage and promote customs and practices which will strengthen and maintain the broadcasting industry to the end that it may best serve the public (Weir, 1965, p.114).

Once the results of the Aird Commission became public the CAB protested strongly against nationalization, fearing loss of profit and expropriation of property (Weir, 1965).

Six weeks after the Aird Report was issued, the "Black Thursday" stock-market crash devastated the economy, panicked business, and signalled the start of the Depression. For government, broadcasting ceased to be a priority (Nash, 1994).

By January of 1930 the government had recovered sufficiently from the shock of the stock market crash to announce that it would introduce a radio bill based on the findings of the Aird Commission. There was an immediate onslaught of objections from the media, mainly from those newspapers which owned and operated radio stations. Mackenzie King had decided "that he would call a 1930 election, and he had informed his cabinet colleagues of his decision the third week of March" (Neatby, quoted in Peers, 1969, p.60). As a result the bill was stalled and in April of 1930, the report "limped" into Parliament and was referred to a special committee which never met. "A draft bill had been prepared but was never presented" (Nash, 1994, p.63).

The Canadian Radio League

The unexpected Conservative victory of R.B. Bennett, in the 1930 election, caused further delay in the implementation of the Aird Report. Two young men, Graham Spry (who had just returned from study in England) and Alan Plaunt (who had previously been involved in the agrarian youth revolt, the New Canada Movement), whose chief concern was the lobby for public radio, met in October of 1930 and combined to form the Canadian Radio League. The purpose of the League, as they saw it, was to educate the Canadian people on the seriousness of the radio situation (Faris, 1975), and to push for the formation of a policy for national radio.

Corbett, unknowing of the organization of the Radio League, wrote to Spry in November of 1930 suggesting he plan a group to educate Canadians on the seriousness of the status of radio, and added "that he had been campaigning for the Aird recommendations for over a year" (Corbett, quoted in Faris, 1975, p.67). Spry responded by informing Corbett of the Radio League and inviting him to become a member of the Executive Committee (Faris, 1975). Spry and Plaunt were recruiting influential friends and members and welcomed Corbett. Corbett's reputation regarding radio CKUA in Alberta was well known, and he would be an important addition for the League. Other members of the new executive were Brooke Claxton and George Pelletier (from Montreal); Father Henri St. Denis (Ottawa University); K.A. Greene (president, Ottawa Canadian Club); J.A. McIsaac (secretary of the Ottawa Canadian Legion); R.K. Finlayson, (a lawyer from Winnipeg); Norman Smith (United Farmers of Alberta); A.E. Grauer from Vancouver and E. Hume Blake in Toronto (Peers,

1969). The Radio League was to become a powerful voice in the development and representation of the case for radio in the next five years.

With a full-time director for radio CKUA, Miss Marryat, appointed in 1930, Corbett had time to become increasingly involved in the cause for national radio. He engaged in this activity "with a will" (Faris, 1975, p.67).

> I became the Western representative of the Radio League, and everywhere I went I carried copies of the Aird report, propaganda literature released by the Ottawa office of the Radio League, and whenever there was an opportunity I attempted to get formal resolutions passed by responsible organizations supporting the recommendations of the Aird Report (Corbett, 1957, p.56).

Alan Plaunt was most impressed and encouraged the other members of the League to model their activity on that of Corbett (Faris, 1975). In less than a year Corbett had acquired fifty resolutions from farm organizations, women's institutes, boards of trade, and church organizations. Corbett knew there was a keener interest in radio in the West than anywhere else because of distances and the long winter periods when settlers become isolated. The western farmer knew what it meant to be dependent on the radio for outside news and market information. He knew the value of the education conveyed by radio. The work already achieved by Corbett in the Department of Extension had made Albertans aware of the potential of radio. The concept of public ownership of radio was at this time more understood and accepted in Alberta under the Brownlee Farmer's Government than in the eastern provinces (Corbett, 1957).

Corbett was so active with the work of the Radio League that "Spry and Plaunt were working fifteen-hour days keeping in touch with supporters secured by Corbett

and others like him across the country" (Nash, 1994, p.71).

In 1931, in his radio talk "The Place of Radio in Education," Corbett spoke passionately about radio and the need for the development of a national consciousness. He expressed concern centred on the need to instill in children a sense of strong public awareness and understanding of the need for national unity, where there is a deep unity and love not for Nova Scotia or Quebec or Alberta but for the country as a whole. He claimed that in Canada,

> ...Radio is by long odds the greatest opportunity we have ever had for the culture of a strong and healthy national spirit, and nobody can persuade me that such a course as that [sic] can be better served by Commercial institutions than by the State (Corbett, 1931, p.4).

While Corbett and the members of the Radio League worked towards the implementation of the Aird Report, Premier Taschereau from Quebec contributed further to its delay by insisting that broadcasting should be the domain of the provinces. Brooke Claxton, a member of the executive committee of the Radio League and the lawyer for the League, wrote to Graham Spry on January 23, 1931,

> ...no doubt you will have noticed Mr. Taschereau's speech yesterday in the Quebec House when he stated that he was going to fight for provincial radio in the courts.Whether or not this will hurt or benefit your cause depends on Bennett's attitude (Claxton, 1931).

The matter became quite a contentious issue and was finally settled in favour of national control in the Privy Council in England. The decision

> ...pointed out that in 1927 Canada was a signatory of an international agreement with regard to broadcasting, and that this agreement was in the nature of a treaty with foreign countries, and that under the B.N.A. Act the Government of Canada must retain all powers necessary for the fulfilment of treaty obligations (Corbett, 1933 , p. 1).

Eventually, in February of 1932, after two years delay, all the issues were settled and all was ready for the implementation of the Aird Report to proceed. "All eyes looked to Bennett to see which way he would jump: public or private" (Nash, 1994, p. 82). On February 16, Bennett announced a special parliamentary committee would be established to "recommend a complete technical scheme of radio broadcasting for Canada" (Nash, 1994, p. 82).

The Special Committee on Broadcasting met for a month and a half to consider and listen to the case for radio in Canada. Corbett, on the suggestion of the Honourable Vincent Massey, appeared before the Parliamentary Committee to discuss the successes that radio had already achieved in Alberta. He made a strong presentation for radio.

> ...I think I may say... that the Province of Alberta has had a better opportunity than any other province in the Dominion to form an opinion as to what can be achieved in the way of education by wireless when a station is owned by the state and is under no necessity of selling time for advertising. I think that is the reason why our Boards of Trade, our Women's Institutes, our U.F.A. and U.F.W.A., our Alberta Teachers Alliance, our Trustees' Association, the Conference of the United Church, our Labour organizations, our City Council and our Provincial Government have all gone on record as being in favour of national control of Radio (Corbett, 1932, p. 261).

He concluded by saying,

> ...More than in any previous age we are affected in our tone and attitude by the extraneous aids to education which are provided for us on all sides to-day, and more particularly by radio...the tone has to be set. There must be a conscious aim to cultivate wider, deeper and more lasting points of view. There must be as well the interpretation of national ideals. There seems to us--and here I speak for the University of Alberta and the Government of Alberta, as well as for the thousands of Alberta people--to be no method of consciously striving towards that goal except by a system of national organization (Corbett, 1932, p. 262).

After two years of hard work, much of it done by Corbett personally, the League submitted a seventeen page petition to the Special Committee, including endorsement of the National Conference of Canadian Universities (Faris, 1975). Another fact which greatly helped the case for publicly owned radio in Canada was that the American Federation of Labour and 1100 daily newspapers were engaged in a bitter attack on the Radio Corporation of America concerning the commercialization of the air (Corbett, 1933, R.T. The Radio Situation in Canada Now, p.4).

Gladstone Murray, a Canadian working with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), had been brought to Canada by Spry and Plaunt to testify to the Committee about the national broadcasting experience in Britain. Murray had been keeping a keen eye on the Canadian situation as he had "a burning personal ambition to run any new public broadcasting organization set up in Canada" (Nash, 1994, p. 83). Murray's testimony was compelling. He was able to describe from personal experience how the BBC programs were organized and structured. Plaunt arranged for Murray to meet privately with the prime minister, the Opposition leader and other important players, in order to enlist help and support for the cause for public radio (Nash, 1994).

The Committee, after exhaustive hearings and meetings, reported that it was convinced of the national importance of radio broadcasting in the life and education of the Canadian people and recommended public ownership. The Canadian Radio Broadcasting Act was passed in 1932, and the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC), was born (House of Commons Debates, quoted in Faris, 1975).

The new Act called for a three-man Commission to begin work on establishing the CRBC. Corbett and the other members of the Radio League had hoped for an advisory body of exceptional Canadians to be selected. Corbett had written to Spry suggesting the support of Vincent Massey as Chairman.

> ...If you agree with me it will require some boosting in the press. I realize, of course, that Mr Massey is more or less tied up with the Liberal party, but would not it [sic] be an excellent way for Mr. Bennett to get him out of politics? You yourself should be secretary of the commission (Corbett, quoted in Faris, 1975, p.69).

The enthusiasm of the victory and the excitement concerning the possibility of exceptional results which the League had anticipated soon withered when the announcement of the appointments was made public. The persons appointed to the Commission were "political hacks." Corbett did not hesitate to express his disappointment both in his radio talks and at the yearly Conference for Education by Radio at Ohio State University in June, 1934. When speaking of the new chairman, Hector Charlesworth, editor-in-chief of *Saturday Night*, Corbett said, "He had great charm, but no more idea of running anything than your Aunt Susan (Corbett, quoted in Nash, 1994, p. 92).

Despite this, Corbett maintained that "Given a few years in which to work out a satisfactory organization, I believe the time will come when all Canadians will be grateful for the step taken by the Bennett Government last year in setting up a nationally-controlled system of broadcasting" (Corbett, 1933, p. 7). This was an interesting and controversial achievement that the Bennett Government had executed. Considering that the Government of the day was Conservative, and therefore somewhat

more inclined towards "private enterprise," the members of the Radio League could be congratulated on this outstanding accomplishment (Selman, personal communication, May 20, 1993).

Over the next eighteen months those interested in privatization of radio complained whenever mistakes were made; and mistakes were made. One of the more obvious mistakes made was that the Commission protected certain of its stations by refusing permission to others to operate. In 1933, CKUA, in Edmonton, was forced to close down because of budget problems. Corbett applied to become one of the CRBC stations which would have kept the station open and running. The station rebuilt its transmitter to meet CRBC technical requirements and installed a line to CJCA. At the last minute the station was informed that permission to broadcast would not be granted. Corbett wrote asking for reconsideration but could not get "replies to either wires or letters" (Corbett, Letter to Weir, 1933, November 24). Money was found and CKUA was closed for only a short period of time. (Clark, 1985). If these commissioners had been able to foresee the role Corbett would play in the reorganization of the CRBC, they might have been more co-operative with CKUA, and certainly more inclined to cultivate the good will of Ned Corbett.

During the years 1932-1935 the members of the Canadian Radio League executive--Spry, Plaunt, Corbett and Hume Blake-- met sporadically but they were not really very active. Those who were interested in radio were watching to see which direction radio would take and how the development of radio would proceed (Peers, 1969).

In 1935, Corbett was made the first Director of the Canadian Association of Adult Education (CAAE), and moved from Edmonton to Toronto. One of the concerns of this new Association was the betterment of life for those in rural communities. At the very first meeting of the Association there was discussion, led by Corbett, as to the role to be played by the CAAE in radio (Faris, 1975).

Re-Organization

In 1935 Alan Plaunt decided that something must be done to reorganize the CRBC and bring it closer to the original dream of broadcasting. Spry, who had been involved at an earlier date as an organizer for the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) political party, decided to enter politics and to become a delegate. He was no longer included in the group and this ended his involvement with the Radio League, which did not wish to be openly affiliated with any political party. "They regarded me as not a good thing to have around the League. They were quite upset about me joining the CCF" (Spry, quoted in Nash, 1994, p.116). Spry was involved in some of the smaller issues which came up, but not ever again to the extent previously applicable.

> Plaunt was frustrated with the direction the CRBC was taking radio. He decided Bennett had to be thrown out of office, Charlesworth had to be fired, the CRBC killed, and a new, real public broadcasting system established. He surreptitiously began what would be one of the most ruthless, most Machiavellian, and ultimately successful backstage lobbying campaigns of this century (Nash, 1994, p. 116).

News of an impending Federal election gave Plaunt the chance he needed to design a platform to work towards the reorganization of the CRBC. After receiving

comments and suggestions from Murray, Claxton and Corbett, Plaunt drafted a memorandum castigating the CRBC for "favouring private stations, moving too slowly on establishing its own stations, having no standards in its programs, failing in its educational broadcasts, and discouraging talent" (Nash, 1994, p. 118). All of this would be used by Liberals in their attack on the Radio Commission in the House of Commons on April 16, 1935 (Peer, 1969). In a letter written to Corbett, August 6, 1935, Plaunt says:

> For your confidential information I attach some suggestions regarding reorganization of radio I submitted to 'certain quarters' recently. I think, between ourselves, there is a reasonable prospect of an adequate reorganization within the next six months. Also, in strictest confidence, let me tell you that I have done everything in my power to further such a settlement (Plaunt, 1935, p.1).

Plaunt informed Corbett that he was about to ask Claxton to draft an Act detailing their ideas and asked for further input from Corbett regarding names of those who would be suitable for appointment to a National governing board and Provincial advisory boards (Plaunt,1935, August 6). Corbett responded saying, "I am very much interested in your plans for a renewed attack upon the radio situation in Canada" (Corbett, 1935, August 14, p.1). The following day, August 15, 1935, Corbett sent a further letter to Plaunt, suggesting he send a copy of the memorandum for reorganization to L.W. Brockington, of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, for an opinion (Corbett, 1935, August, 15). "And thus was the man who was to become the first Chairman of the CBC Board of Governors introduced to the world of the Radio League" (Faris, 1975, p.71). This was yet another example of how Ned Corbett gathered people he deemed to be best-fitting to his cause.

In October of 1935, Corbett wrote to Plaunt adding "if there is anything at this end that I can do to forward the aims and objects of the Canadian Radio League, I would be glad to assist" (Corbett, 1935, October, 29, p.1). Corbett, never the impotent idealist, was well aware of how ideals become implemented (Faris, 1975). Consequently, over the course of the next months he delivered many Radio Talks over CKUA in Edmonton to keep people informed of the developments in the radio situation and the subject constantly in the news. He perpetually reminded his listeners of the role radio could play in the life of Canadians. His networking through the CAAE, the Radio League and public broadcasting was active and involved.

The Liberals under Mackenzie King formed the next government. Plaunt presented C.D. Howe, the new Minister for Marine and Fisheries, responsible for broadcasting, with a twenty-four-page outline of his plans for reorganization. In December of 1935 Howe invited Plaunt to discuss it with him. Of the twenty-four pages, eleven outlined the events leading to the establishment of the CRBC; five criticised the Radio Commission; and eight espoused Plaunt's plan for reorganization (Peer, 1969). Howe liked Plaunt's plans but the matter was destined to go to yet another parliamentary committee on broadcasting to commence on March 31, 1936. This committee differed from the other committees on broadcasting in its size and composition. It consisted of twenty-three members and included three cabinet ministers--Cardin, Ian Mackenzie, and Howe (Peer, 1969). On March 26th Plaunt wrote to Corbett to "warn" him that "I have suggested to Mr. Howe, that you be invited by the Special Parliamentary Committee on Radio to appear before them...I

told him you were the pioneer in educational broadcasting in Canada, etc, etc, etc" (Plaunt, 1936, March 26, p.1).

Corbett replied, advising Plaunt of his time restrictions, "I think they ought to be informed that I shall be in Toronto from Friday, April 17th, to Monday, April 20th" (Corbett, March, 31, 1936). In this same letter he reminded Plaunt of the need to de-emphasize the notion of building high-powered stations and of the importance of emphasizing the setting up of a program department which

> ...could be built up with chain programs originating chiefly in the large eastern centres which would in time claim a listening audience in Canada which now, with the possible exception of the Sunday afternoon broadcast, from New York, is largely lost to the Commission (Corbett, 1936, March, 31, p.1).

Corbett was unable to appear before the committee (Faris, 1975). However, Claxton, St.Denis and Plaunt did appear before the Committee in May. Plaunt wrote to Corbett reporting,

> ... Taking my cue from your remarks, I soft-pedalled the construction stuff and simply confined myself to saying that the first job of the new corporation should be a survey to determine the extent of co-ordination and construction necessary for a five-year plan, and that pending such a survey no extension of power or permits for new stations should be granted....You will notice that in the afternoon your views were discussed at some length (Plaunt, 1936, May 12, p.1).

He further reported to Corbett that when talking to the Parliamentary Committee he had told them that Brooke, Blake, St.Denis, Corbett and he had acted as an executive sub-committee of the Radio League (Plaunt, 1936, May 12).

Ten days later, on May 22, Plaunt wrote to Corbett advising him "if and when a good report emerges, to wire or write your congrats to Mr. WLMK in no uncertain terms. It will be a good move, I can tell you, from every point of view" (Plaunt,

1936). Corbett acted upon this advice and wrote to King. The Radio League was now not only engaged in a battle against private broadcasters but also in the decision as to who would be the first General Manager of the newly formed corporation (Faris, 1975).

On June 19,1936, the proposed bill was given second and third readings. Claxton wrote to Plaunt that, "the Bill seems to be better than anything we could have hoped for. In fact, they have given us practically everything covered in my draft" (Claxton, quoted in Peer, 1969, p.186). The Canadian Broadcasting Act announcing the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, modelled on the BBC, was formed. The *Ottawa Citizen* and other newspapers of note were in agreement. This was the system the editor, Bowman, had wanted from the beginning of his days on the Aird Commission.

The next issue, the appointment of the new General Manager, became a hot political item. The League was in favour of Gladstone Murray who had worked on the BBC, and who had made an impressive representation at the hearings on radio in 1932. The private broadcasters wanted Reginald Brophy who was employed by NBC in New York. Corbett, after visiting New York for an American Association for Adult Education meeting, had a chance to view the scene; and reported to Plaunt on his return that

> ...there has been a terrible upset in the internal organization of the NBC at Radio City. I heard a good deal about it in New York, and I believe that Brophy's position is as insecure as any of the others since the new management took over....If that is the case, I can understand his anxiety to promote his chance for the management in Canada (Corbett, 1936, June 2, p. 1).

Plaunt answered Corbett's letter informing him that the campaign for Brophy was really intense and he thought directed by Brophy himself. Furthermore, he informed Corbett of the widespread rumours concerning Murray. There was a considerable amount of gossip and rumour concerning Murray's drinking habit and his need for money. "He put in an $8000 expense account for his 1933 trip to Canada" (Plaunt, 1936, June 27, p.1). Plaunt concluded his letter by asking Corbett to write to Mr. King praising his recent legislation and recommending Murray for the position of general manager.

> Other people are being asked to do likewise, but a letter from you would be particularly valuable because of your 'practical' knowledge of Canadian broadcasting (I should stress that), and because you know Murray personally. Since King has been filled up on the drink rumour, I would suggest also that you stress what a fine character, singleness of purpose, etc. he has (Plaunt, 1936, June 27, p.2).

In the same letter he suggested Corbett write to Howe as well,

> You made a great hit down here, and your prestige is big....I have a double purpose in making the above requests. The second purpose is to bring you to King's and Howe's attention, as I have proposed you as one of the Governors and I want your name kept prominently, and altruistically, before them (Plaunt, 1936, June 27, p.2).

Corbett wrote to both Howe and Mackenzie King on behalf of Murray and received letters back assuring Corbett that his recommendations concerning the matter were noted.

On September 10, 1936, the CBC Board of Governors was named: Leonard Brockington, Winnipeg (Chairman); Rene Morin, Montreal (Vice-Chairman); Wilfrid Bovey, Montreal; J.W. Godfrey, Halifax; Nellie McClung, Victoria; N.L. Nathanson, Toronto; General Victor Odlum, Vancouver; Alan Plaunt, Ottawa; and the Reverend

Alexandre Vachon, Quebec. Brooke Claxton was appointed Corporation counsel (Peer, 1969). Plaunt's plan to have Corbett named to the Board of Governors did not succeed. Faris notes two reasons for this: one, C.D.Howe suspected Corbett of being a CCF member or sympathizer and two, Nellie McClung was appointed to fill the position from the prairies (Faris, 1975).

The Board of Governors chose Gladstone Murray as the first General Manager of the CBC, and Austin Frigon as the Assistant Manager. On November 2, 1936, The CBC became a legal entity and set out to build a more effective radio network for all of Canada.

> The CBC's primary purpose was to 'carry on a national broadcasting service within the Dominion of Canada.' While its authority was limited by the need for approval from the Governor-in-Council (or the Cabinet) before certain activities could be undertaken, the CBC did have a clearer mandate than the CRBC. The Corporation proceeded to develop a nationwide radio service from 1936 onwards, subject to periodic reviews by Parliamentary Committees, some minor amendments to the Act and, of course, close supervision during the Second World War (Hindley, Martin, McNulty, 1977, p.50).

SUMMARY

The founding of the Canadian Radio League has been rightly credited to two young men, Graham Spry and, more particularly, to Alan Plaunt. It was the result of their energy and planning that the League was able to mount such a capable and efficient platform to lobby and solicit help for the cause of national radio. In addition it was the foresight and vision of these two which commanded the attention of those interested in any way in the outcome of the debate concerning radio. Brooke Claxton

called their effort,

> ...one of the most remarkable accomplishments ever to take place in our country. They had to cure ignorance, overcome apathy, arouse support and master interested, organized and unfair opposition (Claxton, quoted in Nash, 1994, p. 89).

Ned Corbett's contribution to the effort of the Radio League and the development of the CBC, however, has not been fully acknowledged and cannot be ignored. He was committed and worked diligently for the case of radio to ensure the CBC would become a public utility. Both Spry and Plaunt, being young men, looked to Corbett for advice. Corbett's wide network of friends and acquaintances proved most useful when it came to gathering resolutions and making connections for lobbying. Corbett knew people in the west and was able to assemble impressive numbers when it was necessary. He had achieved a dominion-wide reputation for his work at Extension and was able to lend prestige and experience at meetings and hearings. His ideas were listened to and valued.

Corbett, who had been actively involved with radio longer than any of the members of the League, was able to keep a clear idea of what was needed to achieve the best results for the overall good of Canadians. He advised Plaunt, as to what was needed. Plaunt knew exactly when and how to use the influence Corbett lent to the League. When authority was required to lend weight to the cause, Plaunt approached Corbett to make submissions to the various Special Committees which were called to inquire into the case for radio. He also encouraged Corbett to write letters to people in "high places" to lobby for special concerns of the League.

In 1935, Corbett's appointment as Director of the CAAE gave added additional

leverage to the persuasion he was able to exert. Corbett was in the position to access all of the member associations which grouped together in the Canadian Association which increased the numbers and the weight of any lobby Corbett instigated.

Corbett, ever cognizant of the need to develop a national system of radio to overcome the challenge of the vast geographical distances faced by Canadians, worked hard to influence the development of the CBC. He knew, as few others did, what a boost it could be for the cause of adult education for those who lived in the rural settlements of Canada.

CHAPTER 5

FARM RADIO FORUM AND CITIZENS' FORUM

After his appointment to the Directorship of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, and the passing of the Canadian Broadcasting Act, Corbett set about fostering a strong relationship with the newly formed CBC and its Board of Directors. Many of the members of the new Board were friends who had worked with Corbett to achieve the reorganization of the CRBC. As director of the CAAE he spent the greater part of the next year (1936) making contacts with key persons in government, consolidating relationships across the country and building up an impressive network of contacts with important and well-placed individuals in the national life of Canada (Selman, 1981). "It seemed to me," Corbett remarked,"... that from coast to coast I had the encouragement and personal goodwill of everyone connected with education" (1957, p.123).

In 1936, Gladstone Murray of the CBC approached Corbett to become part of a small informal group, to be called the Education Committee, to advise the CBC on issues related to education by radio (Armstrong, 1968). In a report to the Carnegie Corporation in April 1937, it was noted, "a close contact has therefore been established between the Association and the Dominion radio control" (CAAE letter to Carnegie Corp. quoted in Armstrong, 1968, p. 89).

These were troubled times. "Agrarian revolt was in the air in the decades between the wars" (Sim, 1991, p. 56). The depression had confused and puzzled

government and organized groups. There was a great deal of uncertainty surrounding recommendations for charting a course to recovery. Canadian farmers were anxious to find answers to their problems and government was either unable or unwilling to act convincingly. The time was ripe for new organizations to sponsor fresh and innovative schemes. It was in these times and conditions that Corbett embarked upon a new educational radio programme of great potential significance (Nicol, Shea, Simmins, Sim, 1954).

The first CAAE radio project came about as a result of Corbett's connection with the CBC. Alan Plaunt, who was now a member of the Board of Governors of the CBC, approached Corbett with an idea. The League of Nations Society had produced a series of round table discussions which were broadcast over the CRBC in 1935-36. A follow-up series on National Defense was planned for the CBC. Nervous about the topic, the CBC, through Alan Plaunt, suggested to Corbett that the series might be aired under the auspices of the CAAE, and presented as adult education. With Corbett's approval, the CAAE plunged into public affairs broadcasting (Faris, 1975).

The CAAE Executive met September 13th and 14th of 1937 to review the progress of the first year. Corbett was congratulated on his "energy and devotion" (Armstrong, 1968, p. 102). One of the major items which arose was that of awareness. As a new organization the Association was conscious of the need for developing a greater understanding of the work they were doing.

Corbett convinced those present at the meeting, that one way of increasing awareness would be to establish a Publications Division of the CAAE. Suitable

published materials could then be circulated under the auspices of the CAAE; hence increased exposure. Corbett, as a result of his travels, was cognizant of the existence of numerous clubs and organizations functioning across Canada that lacked suitable well-written published materials for discussion (Armstrong, 1968). A resolution was passed to this effect.

The Association's radio work, however, was the central topic on the agenda for the meeting. Corbett announced he was hoping to submit a series of broadcasts to the CBC. This met with differing reactions and the question was fully and passionately explored (Faris, 1975). A resolution was passed that directed Corbett to approach the CBC "with a view to arranging a series of broadcasts over national network" (Executive Committee Minutes, 1937, quoted in Armstrong, 1968, p. 104). The two resolutions passed at this meeting "marked the beginning of CAAE activity in the fields of radio and publications" (Armstrong, 1968, p. 104).

On September 23rd, Corbett, upon recommendation wrote to the Programme Director of the CBC, Donald Buchanan, "concerning the possibility of a series of talks on the national network dealing with various aspects of Adult Education" (Corbett, letter to Buchanan, 1937). He went on to suggest that the series could commence in January of 1938. He suggested a sequence of twelve weekly broadcasts with topics ranging through Adult Education in the National Life of the Canadian people, The Place of Music in Adult Education, The Role of Adult Education in Democracy, and the state of Handicrafts in Adult Education. The topics would deal with a broad range of concerns and topics of interest centering on the place of Adult Education

in all aspects of everyday life. These talks would be presented by an impressive array of speakers including the Governor-General, Lord Tweedsmuir, the Right Honourable Arthur Meighan, Sir Edward Beatty, Sir Ernest MacMillan, Dr. R.C Wallace from Queen's, and Dr. M.M. Coady from Halifax. They would conclude with a session presented by Corbett himself on the purpose of the CAAE. Corbett drew Buchanan's attention to the lack of speakers from the west, but noted if he could expand the course to fourteen weeks he could remedy this. By December 9th, a series of eight broadcasts titled "Life and Learning," was submitted to be ready for airing in January, 1938 (Faris, 1975).

On June 7th, 1938, Gladstone Murray, the General Manager of the CBC, asked Corbett to do a national survey on school broadcasting in Canada. Corbett jumped at the opportunity. Corbett had acquired experience with school broadcasts at CKUA and had always maintained an interest. He was aware of the potential for school broadcasting to develop a strong spirit of nationalism in young Canadians.

Murray was interested in a comprehensive report on what was happening in radio education in each province. Corbett met the request. Corbett was able to take advantage of the joint CEA-CAAE conference held in the August of 1938. While attending the conference he used the opportunity to discuss school broadcasting problems with provincial representatives. In the fall of the same year he visited every province to conduct discussions with ministers of education and their aides and senior officials (Corbett Report, 1939, quoted in Faris, 1975, p. 90).

A year later he handed over an extensive report on how educational radio had

development in Canada. Corbett had travelled to Great Britain, the United States, Denmark and several European countries observing and comparing what was being done in broadcasting for schools. He concluded with recommendations concerning the establishment of a school broadcasting department within the CBC (Corbett, 1957).

National Farm Radio Forum

While Corbett was looking over these reports from Great Britain for the CBC survey, he became fascinated with an idea. Always something of a promoter, Ned Corbett liked to instigate new projects and meet new people. Constantly searching for fresh and imaginative ways to make adult education more accessible for people, especially rural Canadians, Corbett was challenged by an innovative concept (Ferguson, 1964). He had read of the BBC organizing listening groups. The idea had not worked in Britain, but Corbett felt that it could work in Canada for three reasons: one, the isolation of many of the rural communities during the winter; two, the British programme had to compete with a vast network of commercial stations not present in Canada; and three, the British programme was a general programme of culture not directed at any one group. Corbett felt that if he directed such a programme towards rural people in Canada, it might succeed where the other had failed (Corbett, 1957).

This was not an entirely new concept for Corbett. When he was with CKUA he felt that the radio programmes would be more effective as educational agents if organized discussion was included. There had been several attempts already to do something along the lines of organized listening groups. Most had failed because they

had not been properly planned. The League of Nations Society had made an attempt to incorporate discussion in its radio series. The Antigonish Movement was successfully using discussion techniques. The Workers' Educational Association, WEA, had embarked upon the "Agricola Study Club" in the winter of 1935-36. It did not succeed due to lack of planning and effective means for feedback for the participants (Faris, 1975). "All these experiments provided the necessary background to the advent of CBC's National Farm Radio Forum..." (Crowley, 1988, p. 31).

In the summer of 1939 Corbett approached Gladstone Murray of the CBC and proposed "a joint project to investigate the possibilities of organizing radio listening groups" (Nichol et al. 1954, p. 41). Murray was excited by the idea; he "was looking for ways to build audience" (Sim, 1991, p. 60). This represented an opportunity to gain access to large numbers of the rural communities for the CBC. Corbett, Murray and Donald Buchanan (Programme Director at the CBC) met, and the planning for what was to become the Farm Radio Forum began. H.H. Hannam of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (CFA), itself a new organization "looking for its place in the sun," entered into the rounds of discussions. This led to the three-way sponsorship of the Farm Radio Forum, and the appointment of Neil Morrison, a graduate student from McGill University, as "Listening Group Organizer." Morrison commented, "National Farm Radio Forum was promoted as an educational programme, but there was no doubt in our minds that it was education for action to improve the economic and social conditions of the rural poor" (Nichol, 1954, p. 40).

Corbett, Morrison and Buchanan met on February 5th 1940 in the office of the

General Manager of the CBC to discuss the organization of the new project.

> It was agreed that the CBC would carry forward and possibly extend on a regional basis the Listening Group projects. The Canadian Association for Adult Education would, in turn, bear the expense of providing printed and mimeographed materials. They would also be asked to finance any regional field work which they might feel in addition to be necessary. (Minutes of Meeting between Corbett, Morrison andBuchanan, 1940, Feb. 7).

At this same meeting Corbett suggested that the University Departments of Extension would be able to carry on much of the work associated with the project. Morrison added his thoughts concerning careful planning with up to six months advance preparation (Correspondence from Buchanan, 1940).

Alex Sim, a young man working at Macdonald College on a rural education project which had started in 1938, was in touch with Corbett. Sim had been involved in organizing study groups in the eastern townships of Quebec as part of his university programme. In a situation not unlike the one that Corbett had pioneered in Alberta, Sim was travelling from town to town in summer and winter conducting his adult education programmes. The advent of radio proved to be immensely helpful to his work, especially during times of bad weather: "...radio seemed to offer a magic carpet to be everywhere at once" (Sim, 1991, p. 62). Neil Morrison, who had been appointed to look into the concept of listening groups, visited Sim to investigate his project, which was called "Community Clinic." Morrison, impressed with what Sim had achieved, was enthusiastic. Together they drafted a proposal asking the CBC to give air time for a small pilot project in Sherbrooke, Montreal and Hull.

> Approval was quickly given, and the program ran in the winter of 1939-40....The Community Clinic demonstrated a method and a potential that

encouraged the CBC to consider a more ambitious undertaking [Farm Radio Forum]. The time was propitious...(Sim, 1991, p. 63).

The pilot was considered a success. In the first months of 1941, the new Farm Radio Forum was aired, jointly sponsored by the CAAE, the CBC, and the CFA. This partnership was a remarkable event in itself, particularly since it was an adult education program using national radio. This aspect seemingly put in jeopardy the CBC's control of its own broadcasting (Sim, 1991). It is here again that one can see the work of Ned Corbett and his ability to draw people together for a cause. Corbett saw the need for an experiment such as this. More particularly, he saw the necessity for a partnership to make it viable. This was a relationship of educators and friends who trusted and respected each other, and who were bound together by a significant ideological principle of adult education, and the dynamism of Ned Corbett.

Farm Radio Forum involved a discussion group programme, stimulated by the CBC. Discussion guides were printed and circulated to group members in advance of the broadcast. The group would meet, listen to the broadcast and then take part in the discussion guided by the questions prepared to accompany the topic. The conclusions reached would be recorded and mailed to a local centre (often Departments of Extension) which served as the Farm Forum office, where the findings would be summarized, broadcast the following week and used in a variety of ways (Nicol et al., 1954).

A trial se ies was entitled "Inquiry into Co-operation," and focused on the role of co-operatives and credit unions in rural Canada (Faris, 1975). These talks were

extremely well received by people in the rural areas, and particularly by those involved with co-operatives.

Many farmers began to see the benefit of the broadcasts. McKenzie, in an article written for *Food for Thought* (the CAAE publication) in 1944, noted that the radio broadcasts and following discussion taught Farm Forum members the fundamental principles of the process of democracy, namely, that every citizen in a democracy carries a measure of responsibility for the welfare of his country and that this responsibility begins at home in his own community (McKenzie, 1944).

Troubled Times

Not everyone was as thrilled about these talks as Corbett and his organizers, especially those involved in private enterprise (Corbett, 1957). The Farm Forum talks provided an informal opportunity "...where the voice of ordinary citizens could be heard across the land" (Sim, 1991, p. 67). The potential of the two-way method of "...communication in the organization suggested frightening possibilities to leaders of government and big business, and created anxieties for the more conservative farm leaders" (Sim, 1991, p.67). The purposes of Farm Radio Forum were "To give farmers a new incentive to group action and neighbourliness, and to stimulate thought and understanding among rural listeners which will widen their horizons as citizens and help improve their conditions as farmers" (Sim, quoted in Ohliger, 1967, p.40).

Corbett and his followers were engaged in social gospel ideology on a lofty scale. An article in *Food for Thought* written by R.H. Wright, an enthusiastic

participant in Farm Radio Forum, talked of the importance of the concept of the programme. He hailed the idea as "gloriously simple," yet noted that its impact held major significance for the comman man. It served to improve the condition of life for all of those involved. Wright enthused that radio provided the medium for all to be heard. "Here at last is a device through which the elementary, primitive democracy of the street corner or the country store can be extended to cover a nation, or a continent, or a world." All who participated could be acknowledged and heard, even the shy, quiet person. Each conversation could be added to the thousands of other conversations all across the land. "We can hold a meeting of a million people, and give every one of them a chance to speak" (Wright, 1945, p. 28).

The concept of a national discussion was something that proved exciting to Corbett. The notion of broadcasting the results of the Forum findings "was a powerful element in adult education" (Sim, 1991, p. 68). Alex Sim talks about the astonishment and excitement that followed the first national round-up of Forum opinion. As province after province came on the air, there was a substantial national consensus. The myth that farmers could never agree on any topic, and that regional and commodity differences could be depended on to cause differing opinion was soundly refuted. Thus, the time-tested technique of control by keeping the nation divided was threatened by this national round-up of opinion and solidarity (Sim, 1991).

The trial series, "Inquiry into Co-operation," was about half completed when Prime Minister Mackenzie King called an election to be held in the Spring of 1940. Certain "champions of free enterprise"(Corbett, 1957, p. 143) became nervous. The

unity of farmers through Farm Radio Forum was a cause for concern for those with private agendas. One morning Corbett received a copy of a letter which had been distributed to all members of western Boards of Trade. This letter urged each member to contact their local members of parliament recommending the radio series be cancelled. Corbett was stunned shortly after, while listening to one of the broadcasts, when he heard the announcement, "This brings this series of broadcasts to an end. I almost went through the roof. There were four more broadcasts to come, and they had been widely advertised" (Corbett, 1957, p. 144).

The next morning Corbett phoned Murray at the CBC, who informed him that there had been several serious objections to the series and that he, Murray, thought it best to carefully examine the complaints before proceeding. "This seemed to me to be a straight case of political interference with the CBC so I angrily informed Mr. Murray that unless the programme was continued as scheduled I would have to release the story to the press" (Corbett, 1957, p. 144). A day later he had not received any reply to his threat. Corbett's reaction was to call Judith Robinson, a radical reporter of the *Globe and Mail* and inform her of the situation. On February 1, 1940, a blazing column appeared attacking Mackenzie King for preaching about freedom and not practising it. She noted that the Reverend Coady from Antigonish was to present the next broadcast. She concluded that "co-operation is, it seems, too dangerous an ideal to be given the freedom of the air while Mr. King is holding an election" (Faris, 1975, p.95). The *Telegram* editors, who were no friends of the CBC, saw the issue and were outraged at the notion of government interference with a public utility which belonged

to the people (Corbett, 1957).

The *Toronto Evening Telegram* followed through on the subject and on February 2, 1940, came the heading, "Decide Against Scuttling Cleric's Address." In this same article it was reported that 400 study groups in the West and 2,390 study groups in the Maritime provinces were preparing to listen to the man from Antigonish (Faris, 1975). Perhaps this issue would not have been quite so marked, or so opportune, if it had been any other speaker. Fr. Coady was famous for his work with the fishermen and poor of the Maritimes and was something of a folk hero to rural Canadians.

Corbett's leak to the press proved to be successful in having the series reinstated. The way was once again clear for the preparation and organization of Farm Radio Forum. Corbett had demonstrated his determination to clear the path for "free discussion." The planning committee for Farm Radio Forum included many rural social activists: Agnes MacPhail, Leonard Harmon, Alex Sim, Arthur Haas, Orville Shugg (who later became the first supervisor of farm broadcasting for the CBC), E.A.Corbett (CAAE), H.H. Hannan (CFA), and Neil Morrison. In the fall of 1941 Farm Radio Forum went on the National network as a weekly programme. During the first two years it took the format of a mythical farm called "Sunnybrook," and issues were presented in dramatised sketches. In later years it became mostly panel discussions (Faris, 1975).

In its first year Farm Radio Forum involved 400 groups. The following season, (1942-43), the number soared to 100 listening groups. At its peak Farm Radio Forum

included 1,600 groups and approximately 30,000 rural Canadians. The programme lasted for almost twenty years (Ohliger, 1967).

> ... The forum movement offered ordinary people a much more powerful weapon than a periodic trip to the ballot box. It helped them to understand their problems by providing them with information and choices. Moreover, it involved and activated large numbers of people from coast to coast in a common learning experience (Sim, 1991, p. 63).

Citizens' Forum

With Farm Radio Forum in the hands of energetic and capable young men, Corbett could turn to his other major concern during the war years: education for democratic citizenship and post-war democracy. Corbett believed that "the education of adults, especially in citizenship, was an indispensable condition for the survival of democracy" (Armstrong, 1968, p. 67). Corbett saw in radio a chance to provide the citizens of Canada who lived in the urban areas with an opportunity to develop a democratic philosophy for themselves that would effectively counter totalitarian ideas (Armstrong, 1968).

In a method typical of Corbett he became a leading figure in the Canadian Council on Education for Citizenship (CCEC), formed in the late 1940s by fifteen co-operating national educational organizations and the CBC (Armstrong, 1968). At the 1941 CAAE Conference Corbett declared:

> It occurs to me that it may be the job of the adult educationist at a time like this to confirm...in every way we can, our belief that the democratic way of life is the good way of life; and that if it is to prevail against the forces of evil, the barbaric forces that would destroy all good, it can only be through the undaunted faith and loyalty of those who believe in it. That's our job, to show people what a living, shining thing Democracy can be (Corbett, 1941 Report, quoted in Armstrong, 1968, p. 131).

Corbett went on to say that it was the task of adult education to help people to think about the kind of world "we have a right to look for when the war is over" (Corbett, quoted in Armstrong, 1968, p. 131).

At the CAAE meeting on November 16, 1942 Corbett had succeeded in convincing his colleagues that the concept of democracy was of major importance and an issue worth considering. He persuaded the Council to entertain a motion and resolve that the Association should evaluate its performance and give the most serious attention to its responsibilities concerning kindling and giving leadership to a process of public education and awakening. It was important that the issues of the war and objectives in the post-war world be thoroughly examined. He advocated, and the Council agreed and resolved, that the Association should consider, if necessary, revising its own organizational structure and methods in order to meet effectively this solemn responsibility (CAAE Report quoted in Armstrong, 1968).

The Macdonald College Committee

This resolution led to a five-day meeting which opened on December 27, 1942, at Macdonald College in Ste. Anne de Bellevue, Quebec. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss future direction for the CAAE with regard to responsibility for and opportunity to help mould and reconstruct a new society after the war. The committee which convened included Corbett, Watson Thomson from the University of Manitoba, R.E.G. Davis of the YMCA, W. H. Brittain from Macdonald College, Robert McKenzie from the University of British Columbia, Mrs. G.V. Ferguson from

Winnipeg, R.B. Inch and Neil Morrison from the CBC, David Petegorsky (National Film Board), H.R.C. Avison and Alex Sim from Macdonald College, and Frank Scott from McGill University and the CAAE (Armstrong, 1968).

The committee deliberated over the principles of reconstruction and the problem of how best to promote the concept of education for reconstruction. Principles were drawn up to be presented to a full membership of the CAAE at a future time. The meeting ended with a proposal for a national conference to be held in the immediate future (Armstrong, 1968).

The London Conference

The proposed conference occurred five months later at the CAAE Annual Meeting, May 19-22, 1943, held in London, Ontario. Two hundred and thirty delegates assembled to consider the role of the CAAE in post-war Canada. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and to plan for reconstruction and possibly to change the constitution of the CAAE. As the meeting progressed it became apparent that many, along with Corbett, felt that the adult education movement was not fulfilling its mandate, and was neglecting to give the kind of definite leadership that was required in these worried times. Most agreed on a need both for greater understanding of the problems that confront democracy, and for an increased endeavour to arrive at some solution. "A new program of public information and discussion—'a wholehearted campaign of public education'—seemed to be called for, indeed, seemed to be a necessity" (Wilson, 1980, p. 1).

The London Conference (as it has become known) proclaimed a new direction for the CAAE. It was at this conference "that the organization ratified the Manifesto proposed by the Macdonald College Committee, thus securing for itself a moral and ideological basis from which in future to act" (Armstrong, 1968, p.140. See Appendix B).

The Manifesto which was ratified at the CAAE Annual Meeting in May of 1943 was an interesting document. The Manifesto aimed at changing the direction that the CAAE was heading. It also produced a very significant reaction among its members. Despite the reservations of several members, all sat in silence as the Manifesto was unanimously passed. (Faris, 1975).

The Manifesto produced an ambiguity of purpose which was to plague the CAAE for years to come. J. Roby Kidd recalled that the Manifesto of 1943 was "a bold manifesto calling for a new social order," and concluded that this had not ever been achieved. (Faris, 1975).

Encouraged by the passing of the Manifesto, Corbett reported to the meeting,

> It is my belief that we should now plan to make wider use of the technique we have developed through our three years experience with the National Farm Forum. For that reason your Director has been at work for several months on a joint project of national broadcasts on international affairs with special reference to post-war international settlements....my experience leads me to believe that there is a great need for the crystallisation of public opinion in relation to the post-war responsibilities of the United Nations. I am convinced also that there are large numbers of people in Canada who would welcome the opportunity to meet regularly in listening groups to hear authentic well-balanced discussions...supported by organised listening groups regularly supplied with the study materials on which the scripts of the broadcasts are based (Corbett, Annual Report, 1943, p. 10).

Corbett went on to elaborate the plans he had already made with the Canadian

Institute of International Affairs which would provide the research facilities, and the CBC which would organize the broadcasts. The CAAE would be responsible for organizing the groups. These were the beginnings of Citizens' Forum (Wilson, 1980). The CAAE had now officially passed from the function of providing a clearing-house for the different agencies of adult education to that of programming for social change in adult education.

Funding

Funds for the new project were a problem. Businessmen were naturally reluctant to lend financial support to any programme in which the merits and demerits of free enterprise would be freely and frankly discussed (Armstrong, 1968). Corbett had approached the Wartime Information Board (WIB), formed in 1940, for funds to support the proposed new programme. Donald Buchanan, now of the WIB, informed Corbett that the CAAE did not represent a wide enough sector of the population to qualify for funds; but that if he made a request through the Canadian Council of Education for Citizenship (CCEC), the chances would be better. "The National Secretary of the CCEC, Dr. J.E. Robbins, was in agreement with this form of cooperation, and Corbett and Brittain [a member of the Executive of the CAAE] were members of its board" (Wilson, 1980, p.6).

At the CCEC meeting that followed, John Grierson and Donald Buchanan for the WIB, Morrison and Harry Avison for the CAAE, and Corbett and Brittain for both sides, were among those in attendance. The group representing Citizens' Forum

succeeded in obtaining a sum of $26,000 from the WIB (Wilson, 1980). However, when this knowledge leaked to Mackenzie King, the funds were denied (Faris, 1975).

Corbett applied to the Massey Foundation and several American foundations and came up empty. The Canadian Institute of International Affairs (CIIA), promised to search for funds and some monies trickled in. The CBC also provided a grant of $2,500 to assist the CAAE with its group organization (Faris, 1975). Corbett was able to gain access to another grant of $3000 over three years from the Carnegie Corporation. He did this by informing Charles Dollard of the Corporation that without the grant the CAAE would not be able to continue and he, Corbett, would have to accept a position with the Government Bureau of Information in Ottawa. "If I were at all sure that our request for further assistance would meet with favourable consideration, I would not allow myself to become too much absorbed in the Department of Information" (Corbett letter to Charles Dollard, 1941). The Carnegie Corporation informed Corbett that this would be the last grant of money. They also advised that he and his colleagues find a way to support their enterprise (Armstrong, 1968).

Political Interference

A National Executive Committee, with Corbett as the Chairman, was set up. It included most of the member organizations of the CAAE, as well as representatives from business, labour and the armed services (Faris, 1975). The National Executive Committee became very active and planned topics and speakers for the proposed new

Citizens' Forum programme. Study outlines were prepared with the help of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Because of wartime censorship regulations, each discussion had to be in written form and broadcast from a prepared text. Nevertheless, the CBC planned each broadcast to be stimulating, provocative and controversial. Speakers were to have widely differing points of view (Peers, 1969). Plans were well under way for a large and keenly interested listening audience. Morrison wrote in a letter to Claxton, "I can assure you that there has been more thorough preparation and more consultation over a period of many months in the planning of this Citizens' Forum than any other similar programme" (Morrison letter to Claxton, 1943).

It was as representatives of this speaker-planning committee that Neil Morrison and Morley Callaghan, the forum's CBC Producer and Chairman respectively, went to Ottawa to invite speakers to be part of the new programme (Faris, 1975). Some of the potential speakers that were approached included John Bracken, Leader of the national Progressive Conservative Party; Dr. Charlotte Whitton, sociologist; Professor Frank Scott, CCF luminary at McGill University; M.G. Coldwell, Leader of the CCF Party, and J.L. Cohen, legal advisor to the CCF Party.

Brooke Claxton, who was now the parliamentary assistant to the Prime Minister and the chairman of the newly created Liberal Party policy committee, took exception to the list of speakers proposed for the new series. He had been the author of a 1942 parliamentary report condemning Gladstone Murray and the CBC for not having "a wide variety of points of view" (Nash, 1994, p.193). He claimed that the list

of potential speakers showed "a drastic loading in favour of the CCF" (Faris, 1975). Morrison and Callaghan went to discuss the matter with Claxton, and to inform him of their plans, including the fact that they had already had conversations with the CCF. "Claxton exploded in anger, saying that they could not have 'those people' on the air " (Nash, 1994, p. 193). He then "demanded that Morrison and Callaghan be fired as 'incompetents" (Nash, 1994, p. 194). Claxton called the Acting General Manager of the CBC and had the series put on hold.

Morrison and Callaghan were uncertain as to what should be done. However, "... in what was becoming a pattern, the wily Ned Corbett knew exactly what to do" (Nash, 1994, p. 195). Corbett once again went to the press. His friend George Ferguson was editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The next day, November 16, the paper ran an article written by Grant Dexter, attacking the King government for interference with the CBC. "It would appear that persons of some influence in and around government circles have tried to interfere in the management of the CBC." A copy of a teletype sent from the CBC Toronto office on November 17 to the CAAE and several prominent newspapers and CBC affiliates read:

> ...Advice is that the Federal Government is opposed to the programme on the grounds that it is 'far too political,' according to Edward Corbett...A spokesman for the CBC said there is 'no doubt we are in the middle of a good fight with Ottawa over the programme, but as far as we can tell we are going to win it' (CBC Teletype, Nov.17, 1943).

The first of the new series Citizens' Forum was programmed for November 23, 1943. Between November 17th and 22nd, almost every major Canadian paper had reported on the incident (Faris, 1975). Corbett in his radio talk of November 19th

said:

> The job of the CBC is to grasp the nettle boldly, to plunge forthrightly into broadcasts on every subject which seriously interests the Canadian public, and to ensure at the same time that every point of view is expressed with equal vigour and intelligence. For that purpose the forum technique is admirably adapted...(Corbett, 1943,).

On November 23rd, after much tumult and a flurry of letters and telegrams, together with the outcry from the press the decision was reversed. The first programme of Citizens' Forum was broadcast to listening audiences across Canada. It was a dramatized narrative addressing the effects of war on young Canadians. During the last five minutes Ned Corbett spoke on the beginnings and the plans for this new series (CBC. Ottawa, Letter, A.Frigon to R.Morin, quoted in Faris, 1975).

Citizens' Forum met with an amazing initial response from Canadians. R.H. Wright, a contributor to *Food for Thought* declared in an article,

> ...at last, there are signs that the radio is beginning to be used for the greatest job of our time. That is the job of giving to every human being wherever he may be, the opportunity to take his own place and his own part in the orderly processes of a democratic world (Wright, 1945, p. 29).

Corbett triumphantly reported to the next Annual Meeting of the CAAE:

> We are no longer alone. We are no longer a voice crying in the wilderness. Our emphasis upon the value of adult education as a medium of social change is now supported by thousands of people who formerly had no interest in or knowledge of the possibilities of adult education. (Corbett, quoted in Armstrong, 1968, p. 143).

The decision made at the London Conference in 1943 by the members of the CAAE to become involved in education for social change was overwhelmingly endorsed by the reaction of the Canadian public to Citizens' Forum.

Citizens' Forum in its first thirteen years of existence commanded a listening

audience of almost half a million people. It never had as many organized listening groups reporting regularly as did the National Farm Radio Forum. The latter averaged over the years about 1,000 groups of from 10 to 20 people. However, the Citizens' Forum enjoyed a larger individual listening audience (Corbett, 1957).

The National Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum developed into two of the most creative experiments "in discovering new methods and new approaches to Community Education in the history of the Association....all these amount to a new and powerful mass method of education" (Corbett, 1945, p.8). In the two programmes 26,000 copies of printed study materials were distributed on a weekly basis to be read in preparation for the broadcasts (Corbett, 1945). Both programmes received much international attention and created an impressive assortment of "action projects." Planners, officials and educators in developing nations could see how this technique could be used to help with the dissemination of information and beat a path to Corbett's door (Selman, 1991). "It has been estimated that projects based on the Farm Forum model were developed in at least 44 other countries" (Cochrane, N. quoted in Selman, 1991).

SUMMARY

The development of Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum were exciting experiments that "...provided the adult education movement in Canada with a voice which, hitherto, had been, in large measure, frustrated by the geography of this vast country" (Mackie, 1968, p. 26). In many ways Corbett was merely expanding the radio

extension work that he had started and developed in Alberta to embrace the whole of Canada. He had seen the benefits of such mass education and knew the boost it would give Canadians. His training with H.M.Tory and the concept of a "peoples' university" could now be provided on a national scale.

Corbett was never a member of any political party; but when politics entered into the scene, as it did with the beginnings of both Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum, he had well-placed political friends on whom to draw. Corbett knew how to "make things happen."

Corbett and those who worked with him were involved in social change of massive proportions. Farm Radio Forum succeeded in training and identifying leadership within farming communities and provided scope for group action rather than passive listening.

> Passive reception of lecture or printed page is of little account. We must make the facts and thoughts our own by some process of active assimiliation. We must stir up the gift of God that is within us (Corbett, 1945, p. 9).

Corbett was determined, it seemed, to have the CAAE go from an association with a clearing-house function to one of active planning and programming and to work towards a strong commitment to reconstruction after the war. He saw an urgent need to become involved through adult education in the process of planning for a better world. His social gospel notions were permitted full reign as he became more engrossed in his crusade to bring radio and listening groups to the people.

> When people learn to think reasonably for themselves they make a stable society, because then change comes by persuasion, not by force. We learn at

too great a cost when we wait for war without, or revolution within, to bring about change" (Corbett, 1945, p. 9).

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Implementor not inventor

That Ned Corbett influenced the development of radio as a vehicle for the delivery of adult education is conclusive. Once convinced of the value, he worked tirelessly towards the development of radio as an instrument for social change. He could see the benefit and the potential of the medium and fought tenaciously to influence its development. From radio CKUA in Edmonton, Alberta, broadcasting music, plays and farm news to rural Albertans, his energies extended to the CBC with educational programmes on citizenship and democracy, culminating in the most successful and far-reaching of them all--Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum. Radio for Corbett represented an effective means to touch every Canadian with powerful and important information.

To give Corbett the credit for initiating radio as a vehicle for adult education would be imprecise. Corbett did not invent the notion of using radio for education. He was, instead, an extremely astute and nimble "promoter." Ottewell and H.P. Brown were the first to be excited by radio at the Department of Extension in Edmonton. It was Corbett, however, that recognised the potential and the effectiveness of the medium. He expanded and developed the scope of the broadcasts. He set up networks to allow the broadcasting of radio to cover a greater area and thereby serve more people. He became intensely interested in radio as a means of bringing about the

change his social gospel background deemed to be so necessary for the advancement of society.

Nor was Corbett responsible for the creation of the Canadian Radio League, the group which championed the cause of public radio in the battle between public and private interests in the organization of the CBC. Alan Plaunt and Graham Spry had organized and already started working with the Canadian Radio League before Corbett was even aware of its existence. Once apprised, Corbett entered the arena and worked with unrelenting energy to achieve the result he determined to be in the best interest of all Canadians--public radio.

Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum were not really his invention either. Corbett had seen similar programmes operating in England. The experiments abroad had failed, but the "promoter" in Corbett was convinced they would work in Canada. There was already some research being done by R. Alex Sim in the east. He was attempting group discussions through radio. Fr. Coady in the Antigonish Movement was conducting successful discussion group sessions. Corbett assessed the ideas, was convinced that they could work and greatly improve the conditions for informed citizenship, and like any smart "promoter" implemented the concepts.

Corbett would never have been able to implement or accomplish what he did if it had not been for the extensive organization of friends and acquaintances he cultivated. His collaborations dated back to the First World War and continued through his days at Extension. The major opportunity for his networking occurred during his travels across the country when he was doing his work as Director of the CAAE.

These connections allowed for an extraordinary network of Canadian individuals who were concerned and involved in issues and ideals vital to Corbett's causes.

The associations to which Corbett belonged: the League of Nations Society, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, the Canadian Radio League, the CAAE, the Advisory Committee of the Canadian Legion Educational Services, the Sub-Committee on Interrupted Education of the Federal Reestablishment Commission, the National Advisory Committee on Vocational Training of the Federal Department of Labour, the Executive of the Canadian Foundation, the Council of the Canadian Welfare Society, the Executive of the Canadian Youth Commission, the National Executive of the Farm Forum, the Executive of the Canadian Handicraft Guild, the Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Council on Education for Citizenship, and many others which were associated with the adult education movement constituted a large portion of Corbett's network. They also attested to the stature of Ned Corbett in the community of Canada (CAAE Annual Report, 1943).

Young states that these organizations contained the self-appointed guardians of the Canadian national consciousness and remained under the control of a small interlocking group. It is not surprising, knowing what we do of Corbett and his tenacity, that Young names E.A. Corbett as leader of this "intellectual mafia" (Young, 1978, p. 24).

Corbett the "promoter" also chose carefully when it came to the implementation of his projects. He was very aware of the intense energy and enthusiasm of young Canadians who could work earnestly for a cause, eager to make changes and to make

the world a better place. It was often such young people, like Plaunt, Spry, Morrison, and Sim that Corbett drew upon to do the actual work while he acted as "respected elder statesman" (Young, 1978,
p. 24). He was the ultimate politician when the stakes became sticky. Alex Sim goes as far as to say that "it was the key to Corbett's genius that he gave us free reign" (Sim, personal communication, July, 1994).

The issue is not however, whether Corbett invented the ideas or simply implemented the ideas of others. The fact that he was so intent and so successful at making radio a vehicle for adult education is the real point. He saw as few others did a means to attain open and free discussion, an informed rural populace, democratic citizenship, effective social action, and a transformed society. These concepts formed the essence of all he believed to be important to Canadians.

Corbett was concerned with the idea of people taking control of their own future and making changes in their lives. "I also know from long experience that through study, discussion and planning together people can change their social and economic environment and in so doing change themselves" (Corbett, 1957, p. 220). The words and thoughts that motivated Corbett were never far from their social gospel origins. Corbett saw radio as a powerful means of creating opportunity for self-help and upward mobility for rural Canadians and the disadvantaged. "In the long view of things all education seeks a unified society in the welfare of which each individual will find his highest satisfaction" (Corbett, 1945, p.10). Henry Drummond would have been proud of such an outstanding pupil.

Corbett's Contributions

Many have referred to Corbett as the "grandfather of Canadian adult education," a title he richly deserves. Few, however, have considered him as the first distance education specialist. In Alberta he set up his first programme of distance education from the Department of Extension. That programme accommodated the rural farmers of the province. Radio had provided him with the technology to deliver effective distance education. As radio became more sophisticated the quality of his distance education improved. Corbett, constantly alert to new ideas for adult education, increased the types of programmes that Extension was able to offer. Corbett launched experimental courses in language. He increased the number of broadcasts and talks on music. Information broadcasts on new farm products and technical methods to improve production were expanded. The CKUA players made the broadcasting of plays and poetry possible. His courses on western history were popular and used by school teachers province-wide.

With the development of the CBC and the participation of the CAAE in programming, Corbett was able to initiate distance education on a national scale. The complex logistics of Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum were distance education masterpieces. The prolonged success of the two programmes bears testimony to the fact. Few, if any,other experiments in distance education have been as successful.

Corbett was, in a sense, Canada's first media and communications advisor. Corbett "cut his teeth" in communications in Alberta, helping to build a radio station "on a shoe-string." The experimentation in radio in Alberta made him one of the

foremost authorities on radio and broadcasting in the nation. When it was time for the development of the CBC, it was Corbett who was called to the Special Committee Hearings to be "an expert witness." Corbett, convinced of the effectiveness of radio as a medium for education, encouraged, and actively sought a communications programme that covered the length and breadth of the country. Sim talks of "embattled farmers mobilising themselves from sea to sea, courtesy of the people's network" (Sim, 1993, p. 60). Corbett engineered a nation-wide system of communications which resulted in Canadians talking to each other on matters that were important for the concerns of the nation. Communication of this proportion was an accomplishment of impressive dimension. His ideas stimulated and communicated "a national and social awareness--the heralds of national unity" (Mackie, 1968, p. 26).

The Research

Corbett's work has been appraised from a novel perspective. Although only a part of the whole of the contribution of Ned Corbett, in this study his work in radio has been examined so as to offer a somewhat different perspective on the man and his accomplishments from treatments by other writers. The study has been an attempt to track and to trace the threads of his involvement in the development of radio for adult education.

Others who have written on Corbett have concentrated on the years he spent in his role as the first director of the CAAE. Any reference to his involvement in radio has come as an adjunct to that role. This study has concerned itself with the

beginnings of radio education in Alberta, where co-incidentally Ned Corbett resided, and the engineering by Corbett to develop and expand radio into a large and viable medium for adult education and communication.

There has been no previous attempt to trace the historical development of radio as a component of adult education. Other works have not paid due heed to the value of radio as a vehicle for adult education in the twenties, thirties and forties in this country. Most that has been written concentrates on evaluations of the Forum programmes: Farm Radio Forum or Citizens' Forum or on the political aspect of the development of the CBC. No prior study has gone backwards in time and made the Corbett connection. The present study is not an attempt to evaluate the radio programmes, but rather to draw all of the threads together to create an historical account of the "story" of radio as it developed and was influenced by Corbett. It is further hoped that this will give a deeper understanding of the value of the contributions of Corbett to the world he so passionately wished to improve. Through Corbett radio embodied the essence of the adult education movement in Canada.

Related Observations

When studying the literature of the development of radio a number of observations were made. These observations dealt with features in the evolution of radio, and thus were not always highlighted in the body of the study. There are however, two additional points that warrant noting in this concluding chapter. They are as follows:

1.The importance of comparative studies. Before recommending establishment of the CRBC, the Aird Commission travelled to the United States, England, France, Denmark, Holland and several other countries to see what was being done in radio. As Corbett travelled across the land he was able to pick up ideas from other places (e.g.,the Antigonish Movement, co-operatives, and folk schools). Corbett travelled to every province and later travelled to England and Europe when he was studying established programmes for school broadcasting. He also attended many conferences in the United States on radio broadcasting where he gained many ideas which were incorporated into the programmes he influenced.

These observations reveal the contributions made by other models. The ideas and alternative versions of broadcasting observed in other places served as groundwork on which to build a Canadian prototype.

2. The effectiveness of adult education and training became obvious to those involved. Farm Radio Forum demonstrated how community-based adult education could be promoted and especially illustrated the importance of having a trained community leader to conduct and enthuse the rural people.

This observation was particularly important. For the first time communities were aware of the relationship between adult education and political power in attaining social change. The power and effectiveness of distance education was realised.

Recommendations for Further Research

Upon completion of this study there are some issues which appear as possible follow-up projects or themes for further reflection and research.

1. A comprehensive biography on E.A.Corbett is something that would be beneficial for the annals of adult education. That Corbett had a great deal of influence on the adult education movement in Canada is without question. However, there is no extensive study of his overall contribution. Several scholars have examined specific contributions, but no one has attempted "the whole man." When talking to adult educators, writers, and students of the field, there is unanimous acclaim and acknowledgment of his stature, but no one has examined his life, his motives or his complete legacy. A biography written on Ned Corbett would give full credit to his work and make a substantial contribution to the knowledge of the history of adult education during the twenties, thirties and forties in this country.

2. An examination of the Canadian Radio League as an agent for adult education would also be a useful study. The founders, Alan Plaunt and Graham Spry, worked energetically towards the achievement of public radio in Canada. They were both involved in the New Canada Movement which was a short-lived radical youth movement of the 1930s aimed at increasing education to those in rural communities. These two young men were important contributors to the ideals of adult education in their time.

3. During the course of study for this thesis the work of R. Alex Sim was much in evidence. Further consideration of his work is warranted. Sim too was

involved in the New Canada Movement and later moved into the position of the first National Secretary for the Farm Radio Forum. He was extensively involved in grass roots adult education and is still writing in the field.

4. The influence of the Carnegie Corporation on the development of adult education in Canada would prove to be an engaging study. Carnegie funds were responsible for the establishment of many of the libraries in the early communities throughout Canada. The Carnegie funds were involved in the Alberta Extension programmes. For example, Carnegie monies were involved on the development of the fine arts programme, and ultimately the establishment of the Banff School of Fine Arts. Carnegie funds were forwarded to Corbett while he was director of the CAAE for programmes which needed funding, such as the Citizens' Forum. Fr. Coady received assistance from the Carnegie Corporation to assist in the Antigonish Movement. It would be interesting to study the development of these Canadian experiments in adult education in relation to the constraints, or lack of constraints, placed upon them by the funding agencies.

5. Social gospel theory formed a large part of the motivational stimulus for E.A. Corbett and many of the early adult educators. It would be an interesting historical study to trace and determine what effect social gospel had on the beginnings of the adult education movement in general, and to see if there is any residual influence still existing today.

A Final Note

Boundless energy and relentless commitment to a cause only begin to describe this man who looms large in the story of adult education. Ned Corbett was largely responsible for the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education. He was the driving force that never allowed the suffocation of the ideal of the right of every Canadian to have access to education. Corbett's sheer tenacity, dedication and vision were critical in carrying the long process to a successful conclusion.

When asked what he believed, Corbett quoted from an essay called *What I Believe* in E.M. Forster's book, *Two Cheers for Democracy*,

> I believe in aristocracy--not an aristocracy of power, based upon rank and influence, but an aristocracy of the sensitive, the considerate and the plucky. Its members are found in all nations and classes and through all ages, and there is a secret understanding between them when they meet. They represent the true human tradition, the one permanent victory of our queer race over cruelty and chaos (Corbett, 1957, p. 222).

There were many times when it must have appeared to Corbett as if everything would collapse in chaos: the Depression, the changes in government, the countless delays and committees, the outbreak of World War II, and the problems of funding. He nevertheless managed to keep the crusade alive through all of these difficulties. He could always see the light at the end of the tunnel. He never lost sight of what a powerful vehicle radio could become for adult education. It was a most fortunate day for Canadians when the man on the road to Damascus "fell among educators."

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APPENDIX A:

Letter to Dr. Alan Thomas, Mr. Alex Sim, Dr. Ron Faris and Dr. Michael Welton:

7306-154 Street,
Edmonton, AB. T5R 1R5.
June 14, 1994.

Dr. Michael Welton,
Department of Education,
Dalhousie University,
Halifax, N.S. B3H 3J5.

Dear Dr.Welton,

I am a master's student at the University of Alberta, presently doing my thesis in the department of adult education. The topic I have chosen for my thesis is *Corbett, Radio and Adult Education.*

I am planning to trace Ned Corbett's involvement and contribution to the development of radio as a vehicle for adult education, starting with CKUA, here in Edmonton, continuing through the beginnings of the C.B.C. culminating in the establishment of National Farm Radio Forum and Citizens' Forum.

I was recently talking to Gordon Selman, who was here teaching a summer course, and he suggested I might contact you for further help. I am after information on two aspects of this topic:

1) any additional references you might have to suggest. Please find enclosed a copy of the references I have to date. I am planning a trip to Toronto to the archives of the CAAE and OISE in August. If time permits I would also like to make it to Ottawa to the archives of the C.B.C.

2) is there anyone that you know of that is still around who might have worked with or known Ned Corbett. I have two of Corbett's nieces to interview here in Edmonton, but I was hoping to be able to interview someone who was associated with him.

I would welcome and appreciate any help you can give me in these matters.

Yours truly

Diane Mirth

APPENDIX B.

MANIFESTO OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR ADULT EDUCATION, 1943.

The Canadian Association for Adult Education confronting the challenge of world events, in its annual convention of May, 1943, desires to affirm its stand in regard to the basic issues of the crisis and to call upon all interested individuals and groups to share with the Association the urgent educational task of creating and strengthening those attitudes and understandings upon which a new Canadian and world society can be found.

The CAAE believes that in this day of total war and total challenge, academic aloofness and neutrality are not enough and that it is obliged to declare itself categorically upon those basic issues of human principle which underlie the social and economic, and spiritual problems of our times.

The CAAE therefore affirms its adherence to the following principles:

a) The principle of total and mutual responsibility--of each for all and all for each--both as between persons and as between nations. This must be made operative even towards the criminal or underprivileged individual and the guilty or underprivileged nation.

b) Social controls and planning are a necessary expression of this sense of social responsibility. Planning need not necessarily involve governmental ownership of control over, or active interference with, economic enterprises. Nevertheless, it is probable that the area of public ownership and control should be extended in those enterprises most essential to human welfare, and where individual enterprise is unable or unwilling to operate in the public interest. It is still more desirable that the area of voluntary co-operative activity in every field should be increased.

c) Human beings are ends not means. Planning must be combined with such local and community participation and democratic vigilance as to prevent the regimentation and frustration of the human personality. Social efficiency and social security are not ends in themselves but are for the sake of human dignity and personal fulfilment.

d) Efficient service to the community, and not social privilege, financial power or property rights, should determine the status of the individual.

e) The greater importance of consumption over production as the determining factor in economic activity must be re-asserted. Consumption goals, such as meeting decent standards of nutrition and housing, should be the main incentive of economic life.

f) Social goals take precedence over individual and sectional purposes of profit or advantage. This principle asserts itself in time of war and must be maintained for the winning of the peace. Great collective purposes of social security, world nutrition, slum clearance, reforestation, soil conservation etc. are empathetically necessary as binding forces uniting our people, motivating economic life, and giving

dynamic content to planning and to the effort after full employment.

g) neither the old individualism nor the newer mass-collectivism but a relationship of voluntary co-operation, which balances rights with responsibilities, is the basic pattern of the emergent social order. Such a relationship of voluntary co-operation has a place for central planning and control as well as for the legitimate liberties and enterprises of the individual. In the international sphere it supports the obligations of a collective system fordefence and for the maintenance of world peace.

The CAAE will seek the co-operation of all individuals and organizations who endorse these principles in formulating and executing a whole-hearted campaign of public education directed towards the winning of a people's war and a people's peace. (CAAE, 1943).